



# THE UNIVERSITY *of* EDINBURGH

This thesis has been submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for a postgraduate degree (e.g. PhD, MPhil, DClinPsychol) at the University of Edinburgh. Please note the following terms and conditions of use:

This work is protected by copyright and other intellectual property rights, which are retained by the thesis author, unless otherwise stated.

A copy can be downloaded for personal non-commercial research or study, without prior permission or charge.

This thesis cannot be reproduced or quoted extensively from without first obtaining permission in writing from the author.

The content must not be changed in any way or sold commercially in any format or medium without the formal permission of the author.

When referring to this work, full bibliographic details including the author, title, awarding institution and date of the thesis must be given.

**Raised Online by Daddy:  
Fatherhoods and Childhoods in Taiwanese  
Father-run Baby Blogs**

**Yi-tao Lee**

**Ph D Social Policy**

**The University of Edinburgh**

**2018**



# Declaration Page

I declare that this thesis has been composed solely by myself and that it has not been submitted, in whole or in part, in any previous application for a degree. Except where states otherwise by reference or acknowledgment, the work presented is entirely my own.

Yi-tao Lee

08, 03, 2018



# Contents

<b>Acknowledgements.....</b>	<b>i</b>
<b>Abstract.....</b>	<b>iii</b>
<b>Lay Summary .....</b>	<b>v</b>
<b>Chapter 1 Introduction .....</b>	<b>1</b>
1.1 Father Bloggers .....	1
1.2 Childhood in Baby Blogs .....	3
1.3 This Research .....	4
<b>Chapter 2 Literature Review.....</b>	<b>7</b>
2.1 Understanding Fatherhood .....	7
Fatherhood as a Series of Negotiations .....	9
Doing Parenthood .....	11
Displaying Families .....	12
Summary .....	13
2.2 Understanding Childhood .....	14
Taiwanese Childhood.....	16
Summary .....	16
2.3 The Internet, the Blog and Online Identities .....	17
2.3.1 The Early Stages .....	17
2.3.2 The Blog.....	19
2.3.3 Online Identities under Surveillance.....	22
2.4 The Internet and Parenthood and Childhood .....	25
2.4.1 Parenthood on the Internet .....	25
2.4.2 Childhood on the Internet .....	28
2.5 The Research Gap and the Current Study .....	29
<b>Chapter 3 Methodology .....</b>	<b>31</b>
3.1 Introduction .....	31
3.2 The Formation of the Research Method.....	32
3.2.1 Diaries and Stories .....	34
3.2.2 Visual Materials .....	36

3.2.3	A Platform for Text-based Interaction .....	38
3.2.4	Interwoven Contents .....	39
3.3	Data Collection.....	39
3.3.1	Entrance of the Field .....	40
3.3.2	Selection of Blogs .....	42
	Selection of People (Blogs).....	42
	Selection of Time (Age Range of the First Child) .....	43
	My Selection .....	44
3.3.3	Data Collection Software .....	48
	HTTrack .....	48
	NCapture .....	49
	Other Webpage Capture Extensions .....	51
3.4	Data Analysis .....	52
3.5	Ethical Considerations and Displaying the Data.....	55
3.5.1	The Public Nature of Blogs.....	55
3.5.2	The Blogger's Credit versus the Privacy of the Recorded Child .....	56
3.6	Displaying the Data .....	58
3.7	Positioning the Researcher .....	60
<b>Chapter 4</b>	<b>Bloggng and the Digital Representation of Fatherhood .....</b>	<b>63</b>
4.1	Introduction .....	63
4.2	Bloggng and the Online Community .....	64
4.2.1	Isolated Blogs.....	65
4.2.2	On/Off-line Community.....	68
4.2.3	Confirming the Relationship with Family Members .....	72
4.3	The Digital Representation of Fatherhood .....	80
4.3.1	The Divisions of Labour in the Household .....	81
4.3.2	Intensive Fathering? .....	85
4.3.3	I am not a Child Carer, but a Multi-professional .....	88
4.4	Conclusion.....	92
<b>Chapter 5</b>	<b>Rearing a Normal Child .....</b>	<b>95</b>
5.1	Introduction .....	95
5.2	The Construction of a Normal Child.....	98

5.2.1	Revealing and Meeting the Standards.....	98
5.2.2	The Legal System and the Concept of the ‘Delayed’ Child .....	101
5.2.3	Not Only to Meet the State-set Standards .....	104
	Commercial Forces .....	106
	Traditional Practices.....	108
5.2.4	Summary .....	110
5.3	In the Case of Abnormality .....	111
5.3.1	Making Tea in Taiwan .....	112
5.3.2	Making Tea with Dylan .....	113
5.3.3	No More Making Tea with Dylan.....	116
5.3.4	Normalising an Abnormal Child.....	117
5.4	Conclusion.....	121
<b>Chapter 6</b>	<b>Nurturing a Taiwanese Child.....</b>	<b>123</b>
6.1	Introduction .....	123
6.2	Han People, Chinese and Taiwanese .....	124
6.3	Gender Stereotypes and Gendered Aspirations.....	126
6.3.1	Gender Stereotypes .....	127
6.3.2	Gender Socialisation .....	129
6.3.3	Gendered Aspirations.....	131
6.4	Emphasis on Education .....	134
6.4.1	Educational Materials .....	135
6.4.2	Why Education? .....	140
6.4.3	The Allocation of Educational Resources.....	146
6.5	Participating in Competitions.....	148
6.5.1	To Win at the Starting Point .....	149
6.5.2	Competition for babies.....	152
6.6	Conclusion.....	157
<b>Chapter 7</b>	<b>Conclusion.....</b>	<b>159</b>
7.1	Answering the Research Questions.....	159
7.1.1	Research Question 1.....	160
7.1.2	Research Question 2.....	162
7.1.3	Research Question 3.....	164



7.2	Implications for the Literature, Policy and Practice, and Future Research	166
7.2.1	Implication for the Literature .....	166
	Taiwanese Fatherhood.....	166
	Online Fatherhood.....	168
	Taiwanese Childhood.....	169
7.2.2	Implications for Policy and Practice .....	170
7.2.3	Implications for Future Research .....	171
7.3	Afterthoughts.....	174
	<b>References .....</b>	<b>177</b>
	<b>Appendix .....</b>	<b>207</b>

## Table of Figures

Figure 1: Rosie-pa's set-up for taking Rosie's passport photograph at home .....	75
Figure 2: Height and weight charts from Ruby's site (9 months old) .....	99
Figure 3: A photograph of Rosie's room. ....	136
Figure 4: A photograph of Ruby's room. ....	136
Figure 5: The venue Rosie took her crawling competition. ....	154
Figure 6: The venue of one of Ruby's crawling competitions.....	155

# Acknowledgements

This research project has been a struggling but enjoyable journey for me. I would like to express particular appreciation to my supervisors, Professor Kay Tisdall and Dr. Kate Orton-Johnson. Thank you for your critical, kind support, understanding, and patience in various ways over these years. Although it was only for the first half, I appreciate the opportunity to be supervised by Professor John Davis.

I am indebted to Dr. Finn Millar who did proof-reading for me, and Dr. Tommy McClellan who gave me insightful suggestions for translation.

I am thankful for all the friends who supported my family and me here in Edinburgh, especially the Blackburns who helped to look after my children for countless times.

Thank you to my parents for your never asking my progress, although I do understand your worrying. Thank you to my lovely wife for your support and sharing of knowledge. Finally, my warmest appreciation goes to my two children who made me a father and gave me the opportunity of doing my fatherhood.

And, thank you, God.



# Abstract

This research explored how and in what ways early childhood and fatherhood are constructed in Taiwanese father-run baby blogs. Nowadays, many parents use the internet to record and share their experiences of being (and becoming) parents. There is a growing body of literature on mothers on the internet, but the subjects of fathers on the internet and the child as recorded by the parents are both under-explored. This research selected three public Taiwanese baby blogs to study. All of the blogs were being run by new fathers and all were named (entitled) using the child's name or nickname. The entries and interactions within these blogs up until the blogged children turned three years old were observed. The blog entries and the interactions within them were treated as public texts, and a qualitative method suitable for analysing different forms of blog contents was developed.

In relation to the new doing of fathering - blogging - the interactive nature of the internet and its function of creating and strengthening the identity were not obvious in this research. Although these blogs seemed to be isolated from other online communities, one of the studied cases provides us with an example of how the blog and the participants' off-line activities enrich each other. The findings of this research also suggest that these public presentations of family life have the purpose of displaying family, in order to confirm the family relationship with their readers and especially with the recorded child in the future.

This displaying provided us with the three fathers' versions of fatherhood. It was found that the fatherhood being constructed in these blogs is closer to the old version of a good father. The father's role still appeared as that of supporter of the mother, who was still seen as shouldering the main responsibility for child raising. However, from an analysis of the process and the descriptions of the decision making displayed in these blogs, this research suggests that the supporter (father) – leader (mother) relationship (Sanchez & Thomson, 1997; S. Williams, 2008) should be understood as a relationship between the project director (father), who oversees the project of child raising, and the project manager (mother), who has to get the project done. Although

their child-raising record showed the characteristics of intensive parenting, because of this director-manager relationship, the intensive parenting shown by the father should in fact be seen as a type of intensive mothering.

With regard to the displayed child, it was found that the Taiwanese child is surveyed and defined (normal or abnormal) by the state, the medical system, and parents' daily practices. The child is also nurtured with traditional gender stereotypes and traditional aspirations (to be filially obedient) in mind. In the nurturing process, the importance of education is highlighted and the child is taken to participate in competitive activities from under one year old.

It was concluded that, overall, the fatherhoods and childhoods found in this research join forces in constructing and confirming (old) Taiwanese norms relating to fathers and to the 'normal' and competitive child. Since the children in this research were represented by the father and lacked agency, it is suggested that there is a pressing need for further research into the subsequent experience of these once-displayed-in-public children, that will give us a better understanding of the practice of sharing one's child(ren)'s information online.

## Lay Summary

As many parents use the internet to record and to share their family life and experiences of being parents nowadays, these online contents provide us with versions of family, parenthood, and childhood. This research studies three father-run baby blogs which all are run by new fathers and are named (titled) using their children's name or nickname. By studying the entries till the child was three years old, this research finds that fathers are still described as helpers of mothers who are thought to be the main responsibility taker of child raising. The child is surveyed and defined (normal or abnormal) by the state and medical system, and is raised with traditional gender stereotypes and aspirations. The traditional expectation of the child to be filial obedience in the future also reveals in various entries. To prepare the child in a (thought/experienced) competitive society, the importance of education is highlighted. Further, the child is taken to participate in competitive activities from under one year old.

In relation to the new doing of fathering - blogging - the interactive nature of the internet is not obvious in this research. Although these blogs seemed to be isolated from other online communities, one of the studied cases provides us with an example of how the blog and the participants' off-line activities enrich each other. The findings of this research also suggest that these public presentations of family life have the purpose of displaying family, in order to confirm the family relationship with their readers and especially with the recorded child in the future.

When the father bloggers chat about their children's development and put these screening items and charts online, they are reinforcing this concept and joining forces with those who espouse the ideas of normalisation and the institutional way of defining a normal child. When the fathers show the education investments they make for their children and the competitive activities they took their children to in public, although on the one hand this may serve the purpose of demonstrating that they are good parents who care about their children's now and future, on the other hand, it also reveals how they participate in the competition of raising a competitive child.

They do not only spread the idea of the competitive society their children may face in the future, they also make the competition exist in front of their readers. In all, the versions of online fatherhood and childhood found in this research join forces in the construction and confirming of Taiwanese (old) norms of fathers and children.

# Chapter 1 Introduction

This research explored how and in what ways early childhood and fatherhood are constructed in Taiwanese father-run baby blogs. I use the phrase ‘baby blogs’, instead of ‘father blogs’, to refer to this genre of blog in the Taiwanese blogosphere: a blog that is run by the parent, but whose title is the newborn babies’ name or nickname. This research selected three father-run baby blogs to study. I discussed how their fathering methods as they describe them are socially constructed and, at the same time, how their doings of fathering, including blogging, also construct the fatherhood and childhood. In this chapter, I first discuss the motivation behind this research by describing my personal experience, woven in with general background information on father bloggers and baby blogs in Taiwan. The research questions and structure of this thesis are then presented.

## 1.1 Father Bloggers

The idea for conducting this study was derived from my personal experiences of being a new father and a blogger. In April 2004, my wife and I left our jobs in Taiwan and brought our newborn baby boy with us to England so that my wife could do her Ph.D. in Newcastle-upon-Tyne. This move not only made me a full-time father, but also gave me the opportunity to gain an external perspective on Taiwanese fatherhood and childhood. At around the same time, a new term - blog - started to appear in Taiwanese online communities. Having been a long-term participant in various Taiwanese online communities, including several forums, online magazines and a personal website (which focused on music), it seemed natural for me to start a blog when the new technology arrived. Although my plan was to move my old articles from my previously run music website and to re-start it in the form of a blog, I found myself blogging much more about my experience of being a new full-time father and recording my observational records of my child than blogging about



music. In other words, blogging became an aspect of my fathering. Before I knew it, my readers were not only music fans, but also parents who had children of a similar age.

Over the years, it became quite common to see the following kind of comment: it must be so hard for a man to be the main carer, to keep house and everything; you are so great to make such a 'sacrifice' for your wife, and so on. Instead of feeling 'great', I felt curious. Why was this reasonable decision (to us at least) being described as a sacrifice? If the case had been that of a mother leaving her job to look after the child, would my readers still think it was a sacrifice? Why 'must' it be hard for a man to be the main carer? Their praise may be based on the fact that fathers are seldom the main carers of children in Taiwanese families. According to a survey (DGBAS, 2010a) on fertile married women's child-caring arrangements carried out by the Taiwanese government in 2010, 54.9% of children under 3 years old were cared for mainly by the mother, another 33.64% by a grandparent, and 9.37% by a nanny. According to another survey (DGBAS, 2010b), when the survey was conducted, 45.53% of married women (aged 15-64 years old) did not have a paid job, and another 6.53% who had a paid job had previously left their job after having a baby. While full-time mothers were the main providers of childcare, and grandparents and nannies were the main sources of childcare for working mothers, fathers were not mentioned. When I examined the questionnaire in the survey, I found that the question of who is the main carer of the child was designed as a multiple choice, rather than an open-ended question, and the options to choose from were: self (mother), grandparent, nanny, other relative and other resource. 'The father' was not listed. In other words, Taiwanese fathers did not even appear in the picture of child raising when the government was designing these surveys.

However, during those years of being a blogger and a blog reader, I came across quite a few father bloggers. This gave rise to the following questions in my mind: had the role of the father, especially that related to child raising, changed? And who are these father bloggers?

## 1.2 Childhood in Baby Blogs

At the same time, I also became a reader of other parent-run blogs. Being a reader, I noticed a pattern that often appears in these parent-run blogs. Although the parent is the actual author of the blog, they use the child's name or nickname to name their blogs. They sometimes use the personal pronoun 'I' to put words into their new-born babies' mouths; they often refer to themselves as the parent of the child (for example, 'Julie's mum' or 'Tommy's dad') in their own blogs and interact with their readers. By doing so, they are giving the reader the impression that the child is the official owner of the blog. In these blogs, the daily interactions of many different families are put online: these relate not only to the experience of being and learning to be a parent, but also include the parents' detailed reports on the child. In my view, this kind of blog is thus not merely a parent blog, where the blogger 'performs' the identity of a parent (e.g., Webb & Lee, 2011). In order to make this slight difference clear, I decided to use the phrase 'baby blogs' to refer to them.

We can see the duality of parenthood and childhood in this practice: although the topics are child-centred, we can also capture the parents' parenting methods and their usage(s) of the internet; although the author is the parent, different types of childhood are represented in these blogs. It is important to emphasise the fact that the type of childhood and the children described in this kind of blog are a top-down view (of the father-bloggers) of the child. Nevertheless, it is hard to deny that in most cases, parenthood is an important element which shapes the outcome of childhood, especially in the early stages. For instance, James and James (2004) suggested that childhood is 'the outcome of sets of discourse produced by adults, seeking to preserve or recreate the childhoods they remember' (p. 23). Stainton-Rogers and Stainton-Rogers (1992) also argued that a study on childhood can 'inform and reflect social and economic policies towards children and the institutions that manage children' (p. 12). In this sense, although childhood as shown in this kind of blogs is not represented by the child, a study on childhood as represented and constructed by

adults may give us an opportunity to discover how Taiwanese childhood is socially constructed.

### 1.3 This Research

Based on my experience and the questions raised, the aim of this research was to explore how and in what ways early childhood and fatherhood are constructed in Taiwanese father-run baby blogs. To achieve this aim, the following research questions were developed:

Research question 1: What are the roles of Taiwanese fathers displayed and/or expressed in these blogs? To what extent are they involved in the child raising? What factors are claimed or shown to be influential in constructing the displayed fatherhoods?

Research question 2: How does the interface and technology of the blog contribute to the fathers' fathering? How can we understand this 'new' doing (blogging) of fathering?

Research question 3: What concepts of Taiwanese childhood are shown in these baby blogs? How are these concepts expressed? What factors are claimed or shown to be influential in constructing the displayed childhoods?

As described in Chapter 3, three public father-run baby blogs were selected for the research. The layout, texts, links and multi-media used in them were all treated and studied as public texts. To make sure that the selected blogs and contents were meant to be opened to the public, I selected them from two pools of participants in open blog awards in Taiwan. After the three blogs were selected, based on my assumption that the moment when a couple becomes parents – that is, when they have their first child – is the starting point of the fathers learning to be fathers, I collected the blog entries starting from their first child's birth up until the child turned three years old. In addition, as literature has shown that parents start to express the joy of having a baby before the child is born, for example, by sharing the ultrasound photos online

(Leaver, 2015a), if there are entries recorded that pregnancy, these entries were also included in the collection. The main ethical concern in this research was the tension between the blogger's author credit and the privacy of the recorded child. Although the details of the recorded child's childhood were made public by the father, as a researcher, I tried to prevent any possible harm coming to them through my research. To keep them as anonymous as possible, I used code names instead of their real names, nicknames or the usernames of the bloggers in this research. The collected data were organised using NVivo and were analysed qualitatively with methods that are suitable for analysing different forms of blog contents. A detailed discussion of data collection, data analysis and ethical considerations and decisions is presented in Chapter 3.

The findings of the study are discussed in Chapters 4 to 6. In Chapter 4, the first two research questions are answered by presenting the digitally represented fatherhood, and discussing the roles of the fathers as represented in the blogs and the social meanings of their blogging. This description of the digital representation of Taiwanese childhood is divided into two aspects: rearing and nurturing, and discussed in two separate chapters. This idea for dividing the discussion was derived from two Chinese characters: 養(*yang*) and 育(*yu*), which are verbs that have close, but subtly different meanings. While the two characters are usually combined as a co-verb (養育) to refer to raising a child, *yang* is closer to the idea of growing, feeding, or rearing; *yu*, on the other hand, is closer to the idea of nurturing, educating and cultivating. I discuss these cultural concepts in more detail in the introduction to Chapter 5. In Chapter 5, which is concerned with rearing a normal child, I show how the children were represented by the bloggers based on their biological characteristics. I discuss how the medical and developmental psychological understanding of children is shown in these blogs, and how the concept of a healthy 'normal' child has been constructed. In Chapter 6, which is about the nurturing of the Taiwanese child in particular, I discuss how the fathers' social and cultural expectations and aspirations have influenced the descriptions of the children. I identify three factors that combine to construct these children's early childhood: gender stereotypes and gendered aspirations, early education, and competition.

Having introduced the background to the research and the structure of this thesis, in the next chapter I review relevant research in order to position the current study in the context of the related literature.

## Chapter 2 Literature Review

In Chapter 1 an outline of this research was presented: three father-run baby blogs were selected to enable me to explore how and in what ways early childhood and fatherhood are constructed in Taiwanese father-run baby blogs. In this chapter I provide a review of the literature on the three main threads that run through this research: fatherhood (the blogger), childhood (the subject being blogged), and the identities represented on the internet.

To provide a foundation for this research, I first reviewed the most relevant literature on fatherhood and childhood. Since in this research fatherhood and childhood were digitally represented in blogs, I then reviewed the development of the internet and how the representation is understood. After that, I then reviewed recent research into parents (mainly mothers) on the internet. Finally, I identify the research gaps this study will address.

### 2.1 Understanding Fatherhood

Fatherhood may be understood as the ‘cultural coding’ of men as fathers, which includes divisions of labour, expectations and duties (Gregory & Milner, 2011). This coding is socially constructed by, for example, traditional (gendered) values, economic situations, social policies, and also public images of fathers. The body of Western literature on fatherhood shows that in recent years fatherhood has been facing a multi-dimensional change: from public representation (Knijn, 1994), to daily practice, and to legal responsibility (Collier, 2001). For example, the growing employment rate of mothers is influencing the division of labour inside households and has changed the image of a good father from that of a breadwinner to that of a person who can also (share) care for working mothers’ children (Marsiglio, 1995). The public images of hands-on fathers (Gregory & Milner, 2011) and the fact that more men are visibly taking care of their children have also influenced the meaning

of the word masculine (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005), which now may include sharing the responsibility for childcare (Morgan, 2002; Vuori, 2009). From the perspective of social policies, scholars (Gregory & Milner, 2005; Hearn & Pringle, 2006; Vuori, 2009) have also argued that since the idea of gender equality emerged in the laws and policies of northern European countries, it has changed the legal responsibilities and daily practices of fathers. For instance, the rules of parental leave for fathers demonstrate the idea of ‘the care responsibilities of fathers’ and ‘shared parenting’ (Hobson, 2002; Knijn & Selten, 2002; Vuori, 2009). We may say that a new father is in the making, and there is a growing body of literature that is attempting to answer the questions ‘what is fatherhood?’ and ‘what is the future of fatherhood?’ (Dermott, 2003; Featherstone, 2003; Gregory & Milner, 2005; Hobson & Morgan, 2002; Miller, 2011; Miller & Dermott, 2015; S. Williams, 2008).

Scholars have suggested that, since fatherhood is a form of cultural coding, this making of new fatherhood differs in different cultural contexts (Dermott, 2003; Hearn & Pringle, 2006; Hobson, 2002): in different Western societies (e.g., Miller & Dermott, 2015) as well as in different Asian cultural and/or religious areas (Yeung, 2012), including Taiwan (Chao, 2011b; Hsu, 2005; Hwu, 2000; Juang, 2007; Kuo & Chen, 2012; Mo, 1997; Tu, 1999). Recent studies on Taiwanese fatherhood similarly suggest that Taiwanese fatherhood is also facing changes in both role and image. In the past twenty years, images of the new good father -- a father who shares the housework, including childcare – have become widespread (Chao, 2011b; Hsu, 2005; Mo, 1997). Although it seems that a newer concept of a good father is emerging, however, a recent nationwide survey on the father’s image reflected the fact that the most popular image of the father is still that of the breadwinner who seldom spends time with his children, or who even always comes home after the children have gone to bed (The Child Welfare League Foundation, 2013). At the same time, a traditional kind of ‘old’ good father is still highly, and officially, valued in Taiwan. An obvious example is the ‘model father’ award hosted periodically (usually annually) by local and central government in Taiwan. Chao (2011b) analysed these officially recognised model fathers and found that most fathers who received awards are those who fit the traditional father roles: these are of the authority figure and the head of the family; they work hard (not at housework but at paid jobs) and bring up

‘successful’ child(ren); their strength and assiduousness are usually highlighted. In short, two contradictory versions of the good father exist in Taiwan at the same time, and the image and definition of the ‘new good father’ has not been institutionalised. This fact troubles Taiwanese new fathers. Research has found that being in a situation in which there are no role models (of previous generations of child-caring fathers) to look to, Taiwanese new fathers have either to import knowledge (of what constitutes a good father) from Western countries (Wang, 2000) or fumble around blindly by themselves (Mau & Huang, 2010) when they start to be, or learn to be, fathers. However, importing Western experiences will not solve the problem, as Western fathers seem to be facing the same challenge. Research into first-time fathers has suggested that men (first-time fathers) find it difficult to play the role of both breadwinner and care provider simultaneously (Henwood & Procter, 2003). When there are no role models to look to (Daly, 1995), and the concept of the ‘new good father’ has not been institutionalised, fathers find it challenging to satisfy both new and old expectations for fathers (Featherstone, 2003).

### **Fatherhood as a Series of Negotiations**

From the review above, we may see that there are two versions of a good father, and the main way of telling the difference between them seems to involve the labour divisions between fathers and mothers. The fathers in the current research were all father bloggers. Based on the facts that they blogged and recorded issues related to their children, it may be assumed that these father bloggers are to some extent and on some level involved in the process of caring for their children (at least to the point where they were able to blog a part of the process). I say ‘some’ level because I am aware of the difficulty of defining and measuring the ‘involvement’ of fathers, especially when fatherhood is in the process of changing. For instance, ‘involvement’ might be understood by some as providing solid economic support, but by others as spending a certain amount of time with the child. It is thus not possible to divide fatherhood into either breadwinner or child-carer (Hearn & Pringle, 2006); rather, fatherhood is a series of negotiations with motherhood, with the social constructions



outside the household, and with the fathers' paid jobs. Research has also suggested that under the pressure of numerous social forces, fatherhood, motherhood and other gendered roles are all forced to change (this varies in different social classes, economic systems and cultures) inside and outside the household (Connell, 2011). If housework and the duty of childcare are no longer considered the responsibility of mothers alone, fathers are now facing a similar challenge to that faced by working mothers with regard to the negotiation inside and outside the household (for example, between work and family). Ranson (2012) has thus suggested that these fathers should similarly be identified as 'working fathers'.

Scholars have used both quantitative (e.g., Marsiglio, 1991) and qualitative (see below) approaches to explore this subject. In Gatrell's (2007) research, he found that, when fathers are not the only breadwinner in the household, they actively join in domestic tasks to obtain their position in the household. Gatrell found that although some mothers see the fathers' sharing of the domestic tasks as help, some mothers feel threatened when their partners stepped into their territory, and the negotiation between them is similar to that of divorced couples (Gatrell, 2007). Fathers were thus described as either helpers or invaders of the traditional mother's territory. This suggests that this negotiation might still be based on traditional divisions of labour and cultural coding of fathers and mothers, and that the starting point for these divisions and this coding might not be neutral. Some research has shown that motherhood is seen as a duty, but at the same time, fathers have greater choices and can exercise preference concerning their involvement (Vuori, 2009; Wall & Arnold, 2007). There are different research findings suggest a similar outcome: although fathers are more or less involved in housework and child rearing, the mother still plays the leading role in dual-earner families (Sanchez & Thomson, 1997; S. Williams, 2008) and fathers' involvement is limited to light work: for instance, playing with the child, and he plays the second (supporting) role in general (Gregory & Milner, 2005). The implications of research on Taiwanese fatherhood are the same. Wang and Yu (1997) interviewed six dual-earner families and, like Western researchers, found that fathers are involved with their children more in less demanding work, at weekends and during holidays, but that most of the daily routines are left to their wives. The fathers in their research often stated that they are

happy and willing to 'help' their wives but seldom thought that they are (or should be) the main carer of the child.

## **Doing Parenthood**

The discourse lying behind the kind of divisions of labour outlined in the previous section includes the assumption that mothers are 'naturally' better than fathers at performing the type of work that involves care (Dermott, 2003; Vuori, 2009).

However, more and more research findings have suggested that motherhood does not come as naturally as had been assumed. It is a learning process and it is also socially constructed (Hays, 1996). For example, in order to give the best possible care to the child, mothers rely increasingly on experts (Hays, 1996). With new findings about children, especially concerning their health, constantly being produced, the advice of the previous generation may be out of date, while the advice of experts (e.g., books on parenting) is becoming more and more influential (Apple, 1995; Cunningham, 2005; Hays, 1996). In short, mothers cannot simply 'become', but have to learn and to 'make' themselves (good) mothers.

To challenge the assumptions and gendered labour divisions, social constructionists have introduced the approach of 'doing parenthood' to understand fatherhood, motherhood and the interactions between them. Doing parenthood is based on the notion of 'doing gender', which argues that a gender norm 'only persists as a norm to the extent that it is acted out in social practice and re-idealized and re-instituted in and through the daily social rituals of bodily life' (Butler, 2004, p. 40). In other words, gender is seen as a form of performance. By doing (or undoing) gender, an individual reproduces (or reforms) the norms. The 'doing parenthood' approach similarly argues that motherhood and fatherhood are generated from daily practice, such as childcare, and is the process of reproducing socially defined mothers and fathers (Coltrane, 1989; Fox, 2009; West & Zimmerman, 2009). For example, in Coltrane's (1989) research, he found that fathers are capable of doing work that is traditionally that of the mother, and when this household work is shared equally,

fathers also develop maternal thinking and start to think differently about the social meaning of gender.

## **Displaying Families**

Among the various approaches of doing parenthood, blogging can be seen as a form of displaying families. In 2007, Janet Finch introduced the concept of ‘display’ into the field of research on families. Following the argument that contemporary families, owing to diversity and fluidity, are defined more by ‘doing’ family things than by ‘being’ a family (Morgan, 1996), Finch argued that “families need to be ‘displayed’ as well as ‘done’” (Finch, 2007, p. 66). In her view, “display is the process by which individuals, and groups of individuals, “convey to each other and to relevant audiences that certain of their actions do constitute ‘doing family things’ and thereby confirm that these relationships are ‘family’ relationships” (Finch, 2007, p. 67). To develop this concept, Finch suggests that display can be used in two senses: ‘as an activity characteristic of contemporary families, and as an analytical concept’ (Finch, 2007, p. 78) to study: Why is display important? How is it done? And to whom does an individual need to display ‘my family’ (Finch, 2007, p. 67)?

In response to Finch’s argument, scholars have tried to use ‘display’ as a new tool to analyse their research materials and have developed this concept further (Dermott and Seymour, 2011). For instance, James and Curtis (2010) argued that family displays do not take place in a vacuum, but in and among cultural ideas and ideals of ‘family’. When the displays take place in public settings where non-family members can observe them, the influence of culture can become rather strong, especially when children are involved in these displays. They argued that, because of the cultural stereotypes of ‘the child’ and the parental responsibilities, the displayed child-rearing practices are “less negotiable in relation to wider cultural values and norms” (p. 1166).

Another example related to this research is found in Doucet (2011), who used Finch's concept of 'display' to re-analyse her research materials on fatherhood, and argued that this concept can "enrich sociological understandings of family forms that challenge traditional or hegemonic gendered assumptions around work and caregiving" (p. 99). Doucet argued that for those men who are primary caregivers in the family, such as low-income or unemployed fathers, gay fathers, and fathers caring for the children of others, they "require an on-going process of seeking legitimacy (which) necessarily entails displaying one's chosen family relationships to relevant others and having them accepted" (Finch, 2007: 71). However, with regard to the issue of "think[ing] about degrees of intensity in the need for display, depending on circumstances" (Finch, 2007, p. 72), Doucet saw it differently. In Finch's original article, she argued that when the circumstances change in families (such as divorce, children become adults and leave home etc.), the degrees of intensity of the need for display change. Doucet argued that the intensity of such displays (of the men mentioned above) "is less related to change at the level of particular families but more related to social and ideological changes" (p.100). While the ideological changes are still lagging behind the various forms of family practices, in her view, there is a particular intensity, or urgency (to use her word), for infant-caring fathers and those men (fathers) who participate in child-centred spaces where they may not always be welcome.

## Summary

The literature reviewed in this section suggests that many Taiwanese fathers are still mainly playing the role of breadwinner, and that the image and definition of the 'new good father' has not been institutionalised. In these circumstances, the father blogger's blogging could be seen as a form of doing fatherhood, which at the same time has produced a public image of a Taiwanese father. The experiences they shared also provide us with a good opportunity to capture the process of the social construction of Taiwanese fatherhood. In the current study, I selected 'new father' bloggers to enable me to capture expressions of the experience of being a first-time

father, to explore how the roles of fathers were displayed by them and the social meaning of this new form of doing fatherhood: blogging. In Section 2.4 a review of research into mummy blogs is presented; before that, in the next section I discuss childhood.

## 2.2 Understanding Childhood

In addition to the fatherhood described by the father bloggers, the childhood they expressed was another focus of this research. What interested me was not the biological aspects of children: for example, the fact that they are smaller than adults in body size, but the social meaning of childhood in Taiwanese society. How were the younger human beings described and displayed? And, from the public images of these Taiwanese children, what kinds of Taiwanese childhood were constructed? This way of seeing the childhood is influenced by the sociology of childhood. Being dissatisfied with the approach of developmental psychology (e.g., Piaget, 1982) and the theory of socialisation (e.g., Parsons, 1956), in 1990, James and Prout (2005, p. 8) suggested a 'new' paradigm for childhood studies which includes the following notions:

Childhood is understood as a social construction;

Childhood is a variable of social analysis;

Children's relationships and cultures are worthy of study in their own right;

Children should be seen as active social agents rather than passive subjects;

Ethnography is a particularly useful methodology for the study of childhood;

To study childhood is to engage in and respond to the process of reconstructing childhood in society.

Since then, scholars have introduced various theoretical perspectives and approaches into the field, and the sociology of childhood has been recognised as an academic field in its own right, rather than as a part of other fields, such as family studies, education and schooling (James, Jenks & Prout, 1998; Kehily, 2004). For example, some scholars see children as social actors and focus on how children construct their own world (e.g., Thorne, 1993); others see them as a minority group in society -- in a similar way to women, sexual minorities and disabled people -- which is excluded and (in many cases) discriminated against by the primary group (e.g., Mayall, 1996). In contrast, other researchers try to find the commonality of 'childhood' shared by children at a national and even global level to examine how childhood is structured as a social space for children (e.g., Qvortrup, 1994; Wells, 2009).

In recent years, scholars have also introduced postmodern theories into this field. For example, Lee (2001) argued that in this rapidly changing (i.e., social-economic changes) society, both adults and children are always incomplete, and humans of any age are all dependent on particular networks of socio-materials. This way of seeing reveals the limitation of the modernist thought which explains social phenomena in terms of binary oppositions, such as structure and agency, adult and child, and natural and social (Gallacher, n.d.). Similarly, Prout (2005) pointed out that the society itself is a hybrid of human and non-human; thus, as social entities both adults and children are now hybrids - there are no more pure entities. On this basis, he argued that 'people and things, that flow in and between different settings all play a part in constructing what emerges as "childhood" and "adulthood" there' (p. 82). The way of seeing the Taiwanese childhood in this research is close to the social constructionist approach, which considers how childhood is currently understood and practised in particular societies. This approach suspends taken-for-granted assumptions about children and childhood, and tries to find the social structure which makes children as they are (Jenks, 2004). In particular societies, ideas about children, child-related practices, such as child care and education, and the legal system surrounding children have all been counted as factors which contribute to the construction of childhood (James & James, 2004).

## Taiwanese Childhood

The childhood that was examined in this research is the digital version that was represented by father bloggers. In other words, I used this digital version of the public image of children as a means to understand what current Taiwanese childhood is. Some years earlier, Holland (1992) asked a question similar to mine: what is a child? Recognising the large number of public images of children as a common feature in the living space, he analysed those public images of children, including those in commercial advertisements and newspapers, and discussed the meanings of that childhood as represented in the public sphere. However, when I investigated how Taiwanese childhood was studied, I found that the ideas of the sociology of childhood had been introduced to Taiwan only very recently (R. Wang, 2013), and that very little research has been carried out into how the conception of childhood is socially understood. In the literature I found, most of the discussions regarding what the child (or childhood) is are in the field of literature: for example, research that analysed a particular author's works and discussed how this author understood childhood (e.g., H. Chen, 2008). There are research studies that took children magazines and children novels from the 1950s and 1960s as texts and discussed the ideal child characters shown in these texts (W. Chen, 2014; Wu, 2009). The findings suggested that the character of an ideal Taiwanese child includes maturity, calmness, diligence, sufferance and motivation. These findings are similar to Q. Chen's (Chen, 2006) analysis of the characters of children shown in textbooks. Q. Chen's research suggested that the character of an ideal Taiwanese child includes maturity, understanding and an enthusiasm for learning.

## Summary

The image of the child seems to have changed very little over the last fifty years. From the pictures of ideal children drawn in the public texts mentioned above, we may see that children are seen as 'becoming' and an ideal child is one who acts less

childishly than others (being calm and mature) and shows his/her willingness to change the situation of being ignorant (diligence and an enthusiasm for learning). However, how this ideal child was constructed in Taiwanese society was still under observed. Further, the parents' version of an ideal child might not be same as that drawn in the text book. In the current study, I assumed that from the fathers' blogging, ways of raising a child and expectations of children would be revealed. These public images of children and practices related to children would provide a version (or versions) of Taiwanese childhood that would enable me to address the lack of understanding of the social meaning of Taiwanese childhood. In the next section I present a review of how digital texts, the internet environment and the users of the internet have been studied. This is followed by a review of research into children and parents as they appear on the internet.

## **2.3 The Internet, the Blog and Online Identities**

Since I took digitally represented fatherhood and childhood as my data, it is necessary to provide a review of the development of the understanding of this representation. In the earlier stages of the development of the internet, digital text was not thought to be as trustworthy as printed text. However, as the internet came to permeate our everyday life, the understanding changed alongside the development of technology. This trend is also reflected in the understanding of online identities. In short, the online environment and online identities are becoming more and more real. In this section, I provide a review of this development.

### **2.3.1 The Early Stages**

Since the emergence of the internet, the online environment has been not only the route for email exchange and information broadcasting, but also a home where many different groups of people can interact: to chat, to share and to play games. These



online interactions take the form of digital text. To differentiate between digital text and printed text, Poster (2001) discussed the production process of the two forms. He introduced the terms ‘analogue author’ and ‘digital author’, and argued that ‘[t]he chief difference between the two... is the degree and shape of alterity in the relation of author to writing’ (p. 69). In his view, in the form of digital text, the reproduction of information is no longer necessarily costly, and it is easier for audiences to alter the production in the same (or a similar) form. If digital writing gives an individual the advantage of being able to alter and reproduce both his or her own and other people’s work, the internet then further provides a platform from which these digital texts can move beyond the limitations of time and geographical space to interact with each other.

Perhaps the most attractive aspect of the internet to sociological researchers during the earlier years of its development was the digital text-based social activities facilitated by discussion forums and/or bulletin boards (BBs). In that kind of environment, users registered themselves with the forum and interacted with other users through posting text online, usually under the umbrella of particular themes of shared interest. Scholars coined many different terms to describe this social phenomenon: virtual communities, cyber communities, online communities, cyber subculture etc. Early debates on this subject of the online community took the position that the online and the off-line communities are two separate and distinct entities (Bell, 2001a; Lockard, 1997; Rheingold, 1994). Researchers with positive views saw the potential in the online environments to break through geographic boundaries and power relationships to host/create a new type of community which would be difficult to form in the off-line world (Fisher, Margolis & Resnick, 1996; Rheingold, 1994). At the same time, others worried that the online environment, which to them was not a physical community, would increase isolation and loneliness in the ‘real’ community (e.g., Lockard, 1997). However, we can see that aspects of ‘real-life’ community, such as belonging, emotional bonds and exclusion, were all present in the online groups (Bell, 2001a). Supporting the idea that the online community is as real as off-line communities, from the group she studied, Baym (2010) identified five qualities which can be found both online and off-line to support the idea of seeing the online acts (and interactions) as a sort of real

community. These are: ‘the sense of space, shared practice, shared resources and support, shared identities, and interpersonal relationships’ (p.75).

### 2.3.2 The Blog

In the kind of community described above, each individual participates using a user name which is not always very clearly linked to a particular person: an individual can invent any persona or identity he or she likes for him or herself, and at the same time, each individual knows that all the other personas are also inventions (Poster, 2001). Because identity is highly manipulatable and digital texts are alterable, the authorship and credibility of the texts become suspect, and this troubled researchers (Hine, 2008; Markham & Buchanan, 2012).

The personal Homepage, alongside the development of HTML (Hyper Text Markup Language), gave a twist to the situation. Hypertext, very much the basic form of the World Wide Web today, includes not only ‘texts’, but also images, sounds and hyperlinks on a single web page. Many people began using the new technology to set up their own personal websites, and a genre of website called the ‘personal homepage’ appeared. On this ‘personal homepage’, the user presents the self and performs the identity through introductive biography, documents, diaries (updates), photographs, links and so on (Bell, 2001b). Compared to text-based BBs and forums, the identities of the builders of the personal homepages are more stable, and thus more likely to be recognised as ‘human’ subjects (Stern, 1999).

Following this development, the blog could be seen as an improved form of personal homepage. To build a personal homepage, one needed to know some basic HTML in order to arrange and control the output of the webpage. Furthermore, if the user wanted to set up other features, such as a message board on which readers could leave messages, the ability to use other languages, such as Java, was also required. However, blog technology lowers the standard of expertise required by the user. We may understand ‘blog’ as a kind of software: just as Microsoft Word helps users to

produce and edit a document without knowing computer language, blog software helps users to build and manage a website without knowing HTML (Rettberg, 2008). Users can obtain this service from various blogging service providers online (e.g., blogger.com, wordpress.com or typepad.com) and many of these are free of charge. Once registered, the package includes the domain name, the editor interface and organising tools. The capabilities to publish a new entry, to add a link to other sites, or to embed a (digital) photograph and video clip are just clicks away. The origin of the blog is a form of online 'log'. Sharing the nature of a 'log', every logged entry is archived in time order so it can be checked later. Since it is a form of 'log', every posted entry is automatically archived in order. All these features make it easier for general users to participate in the world of the blog. Rather than being described as personal homepages, blogs are described as a form of publication (Bruns & Jacobs, 2006; Rettberg, 2008) or diaries (Burrows, 2007; Hookway, 2008).

Content-wise, there are various ways of categorising blogs. In the case of the Taiwanese blogosphere, users and hosts usually categorise them according to themes such as politics, travel and so on. This method of categorising blogs provided a way for this researcher to enter the field of Taiwanese father-run baby blogs, and this is discussed in more detail in Chapter 3. Researchers, on the other hand, have categorised blogs as filter blogs and personal blogs (Bruns & Jacobs, 2006; Lopez, 2009; Webb & Lee, 2011; Wei, 2009). Personal blogs often focus on bloggers' personal interests and daily affairs and are similar to diaries (Bruns & Jacobs, 2006; Hookway, 2008). Filter blogs, on the other hand, collect news and information of public interest; sometimes the bloggers even interview people and report a story. As a result, filter blogs give the blogs a media character (Turner, 2010; Wei, 2009).

Not only did publishing become easier for general users, the blog also changed the online community. Webb and Lee (2011) identify three main characteristics of blogs:

1. Original contents posted by the blogger(s).
2. Usually linked to other blogs.
- 3.

Most blogs allow, even encourage, readers to comment. The former two characteristics had already appeared on pre-blog personal homepages, but the blogs made the production process easier. The third characteristic is the most significant feature, since it changes the practices of the online community and makes the blogs

different from personal homepages. As Bruns and Jacobs (2006) write, ‘by personalizing content, blogs go beyond a purely informative role and provide a platform for debate, deliberation and the expression of personal identity in relation to the rest of the (blogging) world’ (p. 5). We may say that the online community was no more inside one single site (for example, an online forum). The community was built by interactions between bloggers and their readers inside their blogs and, the interactions, such as leaving comments, forwarding blog entries, and setting up links, between one particular blogger and other bloggers.

In the development, in contrast to the early concern that the online environment would increase isolation and loneliness in the ‘real (off-line)’ community, the users of the blog in some cases strengthen the linkage between on and off-line communities. For example, Gillmor (2006) claimed the Blog should be seen as a new form of grassroots/citizen journalism which can provide information that is not covered (or has been restricted) by the mass media (Gillmor, 2006). Acting as grassroots/citizen journalists, bloggers participate in the scene and report their angles’ point of view, via their blogs, to their readers. Similarly, Baym (2010) also found that an online community may increase the members’ local and political engagement. There have also been instances in which active bloggers were seen as threats to the government and were put into jail (e.g. Derakhshan, 2015; Shenker, 2012).

Although the subject of this research is father-run baby blogs, and the data collected were no later than 2013 (the reason for this is explained in detail in the next chapter), it worth mentioning that the recent idea and practices of the online community, alongside the development of the smartphone and the services of social media such as Facebook and Twitter, are still undergoing a process of change. For example, during the time of the Arab Spring uprisings (around 2011), the roles of Twitter and Facebook in the movement were widely mentioned. The media even used phrases like “Twitter uprising” or “Facebook revolution” to describe the social and political movement occurring in the Near East (Maeve Shearlaw, 2016). Not only the capacity of social mobilisation mentioned above, Hine (2015) argues the internet is now embedded and/or embodied in our everyday lives (Hine, 2012, 2015a). As more and

more people participate in the internet using different services – from blogs to social media to online shopping to booking various (off-line) services – differently, ‘the internet’ is no longer a unified concept, but a jigsaw puzzle which contains tiny pieces of various shapes. With regard to the concept of an online community, we should be able to say that the on and off-line communities are no longer two separate and distinct entities, and that neither one is more real than the other.

Having described the context of the development of the blog and the online community, in the next section I review how the identities performed online have been studied.

### **2.3.3 Online Identities under Surveillance**

As mentioned in the previous section, blog entries are in the form of digital text which is highly alterable; thus the online environment was described as virtual, and the manipulatable online identity was described as a performance (Poster, 2001). To understand the online identity, many scholars (Bullingham & Vasconcelos, 2013; Chambers, 2013; Hookway, 2008; Trammell & Keshelashvili, 2005) adopted Goffman’s (1971) views on the presentation of self to study online identity. In Goffman’s view, people are the ‘actors’ in local interactional spaces. The actors manage what is to be seen by the audiences (other members of society) in public (front stage), and preserve territories which can be respected or violated (backstage) (p. 51-87). Although online performance is not exactly the ‘face-to-face’ interaction Goffman was referring to, when ICT emerged in various aspects of daily life, scholars began to see the online community as the ‘local’, and the online identity as the front stage performance, in contrast to the off-line identity, which they equated with the backstage (Bullingham & Vasconcelos, 2013; Chambers, 2013; Hookway, 2008; Trammell & Keshelashvili, 2005). However, from research findings and trends, in a similar way to the development of the online community, it appears that the boundary between front stage and backstage is becoming blurred. For example, according to the annual reports made by the blog search engine Technorati, many

bloggers now use Twitter and Facebook to promote their blogs (Technorati, 2012). Since on social network sites such as Facebook users are required to use their real names to register and to participate in the network, the off-line identity, and even social networks, will be revealed through this kind of promotion. When Trammell and Keshelashvili (2005) used the strategies of impression management proposed by Goffman (1971) to analyse the contents of A-list Blogs – it refers to the best-known or most influential blogs or bloggers (Bruns & Jacobs, 2006)--, they also found that A-list bloggers tend to reveal more off-line personal information in the online environment and use this as a means of managing their online impression.

Apart from the consciously revealed off-line personal information, bloggers' identities are also enriched by their various uses of the internet. As mentioned earlier, there are various facilities that make it easier to publish and to embed other multi-media files in the blog. While the blog is for publishing, there are other online services, such as Flickr for organising digital photographs and YouTube for video clips. When the blogger embeds all the different online services in one place, the blog, a multi-dimensional self is produced: photographs I take, music I listen to, videos I watch, and websites (blogs) I read. Because the embedding of different resources into the blog can be done by using widgets, Baym (2007) coined a term "the widgetized self" to describe this form of online identity of the blogger. Along with the development of social media, more services have appeared that require users to use their real (off-line) names to register, which narrows down the distance between the online and the off-line self. In addition, this self is constantly growing: by being encouraged by different services to update more information and photographs, and through the interactions with other internet users (Helmond, 2010). Further, similar to the idea of the widgetized self, because the accounts of one individual in different services are usually linked or even synchronised, nowadays the online identity, the self, is networked, replicable, persistent (stays online) and searchable by other internet users (boyd, 2010).

From the characteristics of persistence and being searchable, we may sense that this online identity is exposed to non-specific parties. Scholars have introduced the concept of surveillance to understand and to explain the situation this identity is in.

An obvious example of online surveillance is that conducted by corporations and governments (Uldam, 2014). For instance, content censorship carried out by the corporation (service provider) or the government may result in data being deleted or restricted, or, as in the cases mentioned previously, bloggers being caught and jailed by their government. Since individuals are well aware that this kind of surveillance is going on, they may deliberately alter what is recorded (Albrechtslund, 2008), or even provide false/misleading information to trouble the surveillance (Westlake, 2008).

Another form of surveillance that is more closely related to this research is that which happens between users and is directed by social norms. For example, Trottier's (2012) study of the surveillance on Facebook showed that the online identity is consciously managed by the user. He found that when possible and when they are capable of doing so, users will restrict the visibility of particular information from particular groups of readers. For example, an university student did not like the idea of his/her daily social life (for example, drinking in the bar) being seen by his/her parents and/or possible employer, in case they got the (possibly) wrong impression of him/her (that, for example, they went out drinking every night).

Another example is of a student who had political role managing his publicly visible information so that it suited his (expected) role. Marwick's (2012) study on the surveillance between the users on social media took a further step to explain that the managed online identity is influenced by social surveillance between the users. In the process of performing and the interactions that follow, users adjust the social roles they play in (online) public and the boundary of privacy. She argued that "our understandings of social roles, disclosure, and publicity are altered through the lens of social surveillance (p.391)".

Following this development of understanding the online identity, my argument does not concern whether the digitally represented fatherhood and childhood in this research is 'real' or not. Rather, I assumed that this representation was under the surveillance of the social norms relating to a (either new or old) good father and to a supposed ideal way of raising a child. My discussion of the digitally represented versions of Taiwanese fatherhood and childhood is based on this assumption.

## **2.4 The Internet and Parenthood and Childhood**

In recent years, scholars have studied the different identities performed on the internet. For the purposes of this research, research related to fatherhood and early childhood would be the most relevant field. However, a search through the library database returned very little research into father blogs and early childhood on the internet. In order to draw a clearer picture of recent research on the blog and the digitally represented identity, I therefore reviewed literature that included digitally represented motherhood and older childhood.

### **2.4.1 Parenthood on the Internet**

In 2005, a popular female-oriented blog community, BlogHer, held its first off-line conference in San Jose, California, U.S. At the conference, a group of mother-users of BlogHer gathered and argued that they were being marginalised in that community of women bloggers. Their argument and also their blogs soon attracted the attention of other users and, in the following year, one of the discussion sessions at the same conference was entitled 'Mommy Blogging is a Radical Act!' From then on, 'mommy blogs' have been recognised as a genre of personal blog in their own right (Lopez, 2009; Webb & Lee, 2011). Research in this field usually focuses on the bloggers: the mothers. Through their motivation, interaction on the internet (support and relationships) and the contents of their blogs, researchers have examined the performance of the identity of mother and the functioning of the internet environment (Webb & Lee, 2011). For example, Thompson-Hayes (2011) explored the blogs of mothers with autistic children. She argued that online interactions provide these often exhausted and isolated mothers with social support and a sense of community, which were very difficult to obtain in pre-internet eras. Zhang's (2011) study on Chinese mother bloggers shows that mothers, through blogging about their children and child-raising practices, built up and reflected on their identities as mothers. By interacting with other Chinese mothers online, they helped each other to



‘improve’ their child rearing methods and, as a result, as these mothers claimed, to have a better relationship with their children. When these findings are compared with the socially constructed motherhood described in the previous section, we can see that the internet has become an additional element of the process of ‘doing’ motherhood: when traditional community support is weak (or difficult to obtain), the online community steps in to provide support and to offer advice.

We can see that the internet provides a platform for mothers to perform their roles of mother and to interact with other mothers. However, from these different performances and interactions, researchers (Arnold, 2011, 2016; Craig, 2016; Goriss-Hunter, 2016; Loe, Cumpstone & Miller, 2016; Orton-Johnson, 2016; Valtchanov, Parry & Glover, 2016) have found that mothers also face the pressure of being a good mother in the online environment, and this ‘good mother’ is still close to the ideology of intensive mothering described by Hays (1996):

[T]he willingness to expend a great deal of physical, emotional, cognitive, and financial resources on the child – follows directly from the requirement of placing the child at the center of one’s life and putting the child’s needs above one’s own (p. 128).

Recent research into motherhood has suggested that the ideology of intensive mothering persists (Ennis, 2014); it defines what is a good mother and shapes the way of doing motherhood (Widding, 2015). In practice, mothers are expected willingly or even cheerfully (Waldman, 2010) to sacrifice themselves for the child. When the child is placed in the centre and the child’s needs are put before the mother’s, for example, it is necessary and morally right for the mother to keep herself up to date with expert advice on what is the best for the child, and this is highly pressurised (Apple, 1995; Cunningham, 2005; Hays, 1996). Further, when a mother fails to do so, she will face the accusation of being a bad mother from others, and in many cases, these are other mothers (Waldman, 2010). Having said that, the construction of a good mother is not immutable. Research (Christopher, 2012; Johnston & Swanson, 2006) has suggested that mothers with different types of work status define what is ‘a good mother’ and reason their decisions differently:

By modifying mothering expectations to reinforce their work decision, all mothers can claim that their personal work status decision benefits their children. At-home mothers are accessible, part-time mothers emphasize quality communication with children, and full time employed mothers focus on empowering their children and building their children's self-esteem. (Johnston & Swanson, 2006, p. 517)

Although the emphases of different mothers appear to be different, the ways in which they justify and reason their decisions are still based on a particular level of professional advice regarding what is good for the child. As a recent study has suggested, the way of 'doing' a good mother varies according to people's different understanding of what is a good childhood (Smyth & Craig, 2017). It is thus evident that the child is still in the centre. Recent research into online motherhood (Arnold, 2011, 2016; Craig, 2016; Goriss-Hunter, 2016; Loe, Cumpstone & Miller, 2016; Orton-Johnson, 2016; Valtchanov, Parry & Glover, 2016) has suggested that surveillance of the ideology of intensive mothering is also performed on the internet through blog comments and social media. These findings echo the findings of the literature reviewed earlier in this chapter: online identities are under the surveillance of social norms and expectations. In the case of online motherhood, it is under the surveillance of the ideology of intensive mothering. It is worth mentioning that, at the same time, there have been various attempts to resist or challenge this trend of a good mother by showing that mothers can put their own needs above their children's and/or support each other on the journey of being 'mother outlaws' (Arnold, 2016; Blanchette, 2015; Craig, 2016; Goriss-Hunter, 2016; Jesella, 2009; Loe et al., 2016; Orton-Johnson, 2016).

With regard to how fathers use the internet, researchers have found that stay-at-home fathers use online discussion groups to "vent[ing] their daily frustrations, see[ing] how others have handled similar situations, and [...] just chat[ing] with other men" (Livesay, 2011, p. 174). Åsenhed, Kilstam, Alehagen and Baggens used blogs to analyse the experience of first-time fathers. Their finding also similarly suggested that, when first-time fathers are looking for a modern version of fatherhood which is different from that of their own fathers, blogs can be seen as a tool that "can give men an opportunity to strengthen their identities as fathers through interaction with

others in the same life situation” (Åsenhed, Kilstam, Alehagen, & Baggens, 2014, p. 1315). The aspect of obtaining emotional and social support seems similar to the finding regarding online motherhood. Unlike the findings which suggested that online motherhood is under the surveillance of social norms, however, we can see that in the case of fathers, the internet plays a role when they are trying to change the social norms of the old good father. In the current study, in addition to the fatherhood and childhood that were represented, I also paid attention to the fathers’ use of the internet and the interactions in the blogs in order to discover the social meaning of this doing of fatherhood (blogging).

## **2.4.2 Childhood on the Internet**

If we see childhood as a socially constructed space for children, the online environment provides an opportunity for low mobility children to travel (virtually) beyond geographic boundaries (Holloway & Valentine, 2003). Researchers have found that older children use the internet to help conduct their off-line friendships (Boudreau, 2007) and to build their own relationships with other community members (Polak, 2007). Through an examination of adolescent girls’ blogs, Bell (2007) found that the technology of blogs provides an entry point from which to explore “how the activities of girls are renegotiating boundaries: the boundaries of their lives, their relationships and of public/private space” (p. 108). In short, different researchers have shown that (older) children are not only active users, but also producers of the cyber community in various ways (Weber & Dixon, 2007). At the same time, it has been shown that the internet shapes the social space and social activities of children.

The childhood explored in this research was represented by the fathers, not by the children themselves. This limits the possibilities of making assumptions about the children’s own thinking and actions. Nevertheless, this online version of childhood is not simply a story told by the fathers. The phenomenon of sharing a child’s information online has been examined by Tama Leaver (2015) in the aspect of

surveillance and the right of privacy. When discussing the sharing of the first ultrasound photograph of an unborn child online, Leaver used the term “intimate surveillance” to understand this relationship between the sharing parents and the young people who have little or no agency to resist. He suggests that the online services should review their terms and conditions considering this new form of sharing of others’ (children) information. Apart from concerns about the privacy and personal data of the child, Leaver also points out that “[I]ntimate surveillance normalises a surveillance culture facilitated by our nearest and dearest, normalising the idea that parents will survey their kids in particular ways” (2015, p.158). However, surveillance may not be the only thing being confirmed. In the online environment, parents refer to this online aspect of their child as the ‘digital legacy’ of the child. While some think it is not fair to share too much information about children online (Leckart, 2012), other parents are building and shaping this digital legacy intentionally: for example, ‘reserving’ the email account, domain names, and managing what data are to be revealed online (CECILYK, 2012). Whatever their preference, these parents share the assumption that this digital version of the child will last a long time and will affect the child and how others know the child, both now and in the future. Their discussions show that parents are indeed constructing their babies online.

## 2.5 The Research Gap and the Current Study

In summary, the review of the literature presented in this chapter revealed that the ways in which fathers use the internet is under-explored and, since young children have limited ability to use the internet on their own, there is as yet little discussion on early childhood online. As discussed in an earlier section, despite the fact that most Taiwanese fathers seem to be far removed from child rearing, there are father-run baby blogs on the blogosphere in Taiwan. An exploration of these blogs has the potential to reveal the Taiwanese ‘new good father’ in the making, at the level of online public representation, and also to contribute to the shortage of research into

fatherhood on the internet. Another intention in the current study was to use father bloggers' expressions as the data to explore how online early childhood is represented by those fathers. In so doing, it will also go some way to bridge the gaps represented by the absence of online younger children and to capture the image of contemporary Taiwanese childhood. In the next chapter, the methodology used in this research is discussed.

## Chapter 3 Methodology

### 3.1 Introduction

The aim of this research was to explore how and in what ways early childhood and fatherhood are constructed in Taiwanese father-run baby blogs. To achieve this aim, the following research questions were developed:

Research question 1: What are the roles of Taiwanese fathers displayed and/or expressed in these blogs? To what extent are they involved in the child raising? What factors are claimed or shown to be influential in constructing the displayed fatherhoods?

Research question 2: How does the interface and technology of the blog contribute to the fathers' fathering? How can we understand this 'new' doing (blogging) of fathering?

Research question 3: What concepts of Taiwanese childhood are shown in these baby blogs? How are these concepts expressed? What factors are claimed or shown to be influential in constructing the displayed childhoods?

In order to answer the research questions, the methodology adopted in this research was designed based on my understanding that blog contains different forms of contents such as texts, hyperlinks and graphics. In order to deal with these different types of blog content, a variety of methods that have already been used by researchers have informed on the design. Before I discuss these methods and decision making in different topics, here I outline my final design: Being interested in the public images of fathers and children, I decided to select blogs which were open to the public. I identified two Taiwanese blog awards as the entrance to enter the field of Taiwanese father-run baby blogs. In the end, three father-run baby blogs were selected and the entries covering the first three years of the first child in the household were collected.

In this chapter, I discuss my decision making in steps. In the first section, I discuss the characteristics of blog documents in three dimensions: diaries and stories, visual materials and interactive platforms, and argue that the blog contents are interwoven. In this section I describe how I referred to a variety of research approaches in order to find a way of dealing with different types of blog content. In the second section, I discuss how I selected the three blogs for this research and introduce the steps I took to collect, manage and analyse the data. In the process of collecting the data, I encountered some technical problems and found a way to solve them. This experience is also recounted in the hope to be referential for future studies. In this section, I also provide basic information relating to the three selected blogs in order to help clarify the discussion in the following three chapters. Finally, I address relevant ethical considerations, including those related to the public nature (that is, whether or not the blog is open to the public) of the blogs and how to safeguard the privacy of the children involved. Based on my considerations, I explain my decision regarding the best way to present the data in this thesis. And finally, a reflexive discussion on the researcher's position in this research.

## **3.2 The Formation of the Research Method**

In order to find the most suitable approach for answering my research questions, I first referred to the ethnographic approaches. Sociological researchers have introduced the methodology of ethnography to observe social activities happening online, from online forums, bulletins to game sites. Hine (2000) described this approach as 'Virtual Ethnography'. Although she did acknowledge the existence of potentially rich data within the online environment, in her view, the online environment is not simply a culture in its own right, but also a cultural artefact of off-line society (p.14). In this sense, online ethnography is 'almost but not quite like the real thing' (p. 10); thus, it is 'virtual'. Taking these points into account, she suggested that another important task for Virtual Ethnography is to explore both the boundary and the relationship between the virtual and the 'real' worlds in order to

make an overall observation. As shown in the literature review in Chapter 2, Hine's subsequent research (Hine, 2012, 2015b) has suggested that the boundary has become blurred. Since the internet is now embedded and embodied in everyday life, the concept 'virtual' might no longer be precise enough to describe the internet. From a similar, but different point of view, Kozinets (2012) argued that since reality and the idea of holism are also socially constructed, there is no 'really' real ethnography, but only 'a delectable variety of different types of ethnography' (p. 62). In his view, if the aim of a research study is to explore the online environment, the kind of ethnography which observes the online world *only* is sufficient and should be recognised as a real (rather than virtual) thing in its own right. He thus called this approach 'Netnography' to differentiate it from the idea of 'Virtual Ethnography'. Although they called the approach by different names, Kozinets agreed with Hines that if the researcher intends to generalise the findings of Netnography to the off-line society, in a similar vein to Hine's suggestion, Netnography should represent only part of a bigger project and play more of a supporting role.

In the designing stage of this research, I did see the Taiwanese father-run baby blogs as the field site to which I would virtually travel, and since the aim of this research was to investigate digitally represented fatherhood and childhood and the intention was not to generalise the findings to the off-line Taiwanese society, I once accounted my method might be closer to Netnography as argued by Kozinets. However, during the process of collecting and reading my data, I found that the way I 'virtually' travelled was different from the way in which researchers have participated in discussion forums. I did not participate in the same online environment at the time the entries and comments were posted. Instead, I read the collected entries after they had been posted some years later. The reason behind this decision is discussed in Section 3.3 with more details. In short, this was done intentionally to enable me to see the changes over time and to have the opportunity to observe fatherhood and childhood in the process of construction. By doing so, I was able to observe their social activities through the organised logs of entries and their readers' comments. However, the above factors do not necessarily make this study a piece of ethnographic research. Although it is difficult to judge whether an approach is or is not ethnographic, the type of observation I engaged in may have taken me a step



away from ethnography. Since the observation did not take place at the same time as the social activities that were happening, I may have lost track of some of the actions and reactions. For example, if a teasing comment was posted and the blogger deleted it after he saw it, I would not know of the existence of the teasing nor of the reaction or feelings of the blogger. Considering this, if I had to locate my research within any named approach, I would position it somewhere between Netnography and documentary research, and somewhat closer to documentary research. There have been different ways of using documents in social research (Scott, 1990). The usage of documents in this research is to use them as resources: through the analysis of these documents to learn about the author and his production.

In view of this positioning, I adjusted my methods to suit the nature of the documentary evidence, in this case the blog. The contents of blogs are not necessarily in the form of written text. In most cases, visual data such as photographs, images and video clips, and hyperlinks are also featured in blogs. In this section I outline and discuss my understanding of the different formats of the content of blogs in three dimensions: blogs provide diaries and stories; blogs provide visual materials such as photographs and video clips; and blogs provide a platform for text-based interactions. Based on this understanding, I then introduce how I viewed these different formats of data in this research. The discussion in this section is thus an account of my preparations and the guidelines I set myself before I actually conducted the analysis of the data.

### **3.2.1 Diaries and Stories**

Rather than being described as personal homepages, blogs are described as a form of publication (Bruns & Jacobs, 2006; Rettberg, 2008) or diaries (Burrows, 2007; Hookway, 2008). As mentioned in Chapter 2, the origin of the blog is a form of online ‘log’. In the same way as a ‘log’, every logged entry is archived in time order so it can be checked later. This dimension of the blog provides a whole set of diaries that may be accessed. In the case of baby blogs, these entries over time do possess

the characteristics of diaries, as Plummer (2001) described: “[diary] chronicling as it does the immediately contemporaneous flow of public and private events that are significant to the diaries”(P.48). Scholars have for a long time acknowledged the benefit of using diaries to explore personal history and development (see, e.g., Allport, 1942; Plummer, 2001; Scott, 1990). However, there are some differences between blogs and traditional diaries. First, unlike traditional diaries, which are, in Allport’s (1942) view, written for the diary keeper him or herself, bloggers usually blog for particular audiences and publish each entry in each ‘now’. By that I mean: a traditional diary, if published, is usually published later than the time it was written, and every entry is published all together in one go. In the case of blogs, by contrast, each entry is published when the entry is actually made, which is why I use the expression ‘in each ‘now’’. This character may also provide the chance that an earlier interaction will influence the later entries. Second, this form of diary is kept using hypertext, which contains text produced by the blogger, multi-media files, links and feedback from the blogger’s readers. Traditional diaries on the other hand do not usually feature the keeper’s social activities or a reader’s feedback in the writing in the way blogs do (Beaulieu, 2013; Park & Thelwall, 2013), even when they are published. The interactive nature of blogs is discussed in section 3.2.3. To return to the dimension of seeing blogs as published diaries or stories, as shown in the review of literature, it is this public nature of the blog which gives the blogger an online appearance to manage (Trammell & Keshelashvili, 2005). In this sense, blog entries will only be able to present us with the self (or ‘front stage performance (Goffman, 1971)’) the blogger wants others to know. Second, from the point of view of recording the child, the ‘diary’ is not kept by the child but by the father; it is thus a diary *about* the child or *for* the child, but it is not a diary *of* the child. In other words, they are stories told by the blogger. Therefore in my analysis, I did not try to expand the findings to an interpretation of the daily life of the bloggers and their children, but limited my interpretation to the life that was being shown online.

Since baby blogs can be seen as stories that are told, I borrowed some ideas from narrative analysis. Because the narrative can give subjects an identity and the opportunity to express their ideas about who they believe they are (Doucet & Mauthner, 2008), it helps to analyse personal stories told. Researchers care not only

about the contents and the structure of the stories, but also about the production process: including the space in which the stories were told, the language used, the background and identity of and the power relationship between the interviewer and interviewee (Fina & Georgakopoulou, 2008). With regard to the father-run baby blogs used in the current research, the following analytic questions were asked in the analysis stage: Who is the storyteller? Who were the intended readers? What is inside the story? What is outside the story? And how did he tell the stories?

### **3.2.2 Visual Materials**

Many digital photographs featured in baby blogs are family photographs. Some scholars (Scott, 1990; Sontag, 1977) have argued that family photographs can tell the researcher a lot about a family. Research has also shown that the family album contains information-rich material through which we can see narratives of families and even communities (e.g., Batchen, 2004; Spence & Holland, 1991). Owing to the facts that family photographs are kept personally, that they may be lost, or sent to others, it has been argued that the greatest challenge involved in using family photographs in research is the difficulty of access (Scott, 1990). However, in the last twenty years or so, the meaning of photographs has expanded to include binary data, which can be displayed by means of a suitable device such as an image: a digital photograph. As it becomes easier to take, to store, to edit and to show these digital photographs, people nowadays ‘routinely make and store digital photos [.....] through web applications’ (Hand, 2012, p. 1). Family photographs today are not necessarily just kept in a tin box or in photo albums in the household; many of them have been put online, tagged, categorised and archived. In the case of baby blogs, the interface of the blog itself may not be the only space in which to store and organise digital photographs. One of the usual practices is to store photographs on a site like flickr, designed for organising and sharing photographs, and then embedding the image into the blog. Not just still images, but under similar circumstances, video

clips of the child, stored on Youtube for example, are another common feature. Here I discuss the ways in which I viewed and analysed the visual data in this research.

In recent years, more and more studies of social interaction have used visual methods to capture and to analyse topics of various kinds (Heath, 2011). Since the data can (in a sense) preserve, store and represent the ‘realities’ (Emmison, 2011) and can be replayed, this kind of data not only makes it possible to conduct a delayed analysis, but also allows other researchers to conduct their own analyses (Lomax & Casey, 1998). In the case of research on baby blogs, instead of simply reading the blogger’s interpretation, if there were video clips of the child been published, it will give the researcher the opportunity to observe the child him or herself. My using of visual data was in recognition of their benefits, as discussed above, and also for the purpose of achieving intertextuality (Prior, 2011): that is, using them together with the other contents provided by the blogs, in order to produce more comprehensive answers to my research questions.

In the process, I not only adopted an empirical approach, for example, that of Goffman (1976), to analyse the images in their own right, but also took texts that were around, or related to, the visual data into account. For example, the caption of a photograph or subtitles of a video file were also taken into account when investigating the meaning of the visual data. This is not say, however, that I focused on the interpretations made by the blogger alone. When interpreting images, many scholars (e.g., Berger, 1972; Emmison, 2011; Plummer, 2001; Sontag, 1977) have suggested that images, although seen as fixed realities in their own right, can lie. With regard to the caption of a picture, Hall (1997) also reminded us that a caption is not the only meaning of the image, but is one that has been selected and amplified (Hall, 1997), in order to direct the readers’ reading. Bearing this in mind, my approach followed Chaplin’s (2005) suggestion: to ‘treat the image and caption together as a text-to-be-read’ (1.12). On the basis of the above, in this research, when analysing the digital photographs, the following analytical questions were asked: Who took the photograph, and for what purpose? Was it a live capture, a posed shot, or a studio shot? Who was in the photograph and who was not?

### 3.2.3 A Platform for Text-based Interaction

It has been argued by scholars that the comment function makes the blogosphere an interactive platform, and the interactions such as comments, debating, forwarding should also be considered as part of the blog, even they are not exactly produced by the blogger (Bruns, 2008). This interactive nature, in Bruns and Jacobs' (2006) view, breaks down the boundaries between producers and users, and the product (blog contents) is thus different from that of traditional media (Bruns, 2008). The different forms of interaction have transformed the blogosphere from a list of still records into a creative and interactive environment. In this dimension, baby blogs provide us with various kinds of information that enable us to explore the untold stories, including links, comments and opinions. Seeing the comments and responses as part of the story telling, the following analytical questions were asked when I analysed the comment section in these blogs: Who left the comment, and for what purpose? How was the opinion expressed? How did the blogger respond (the tone he expressed) and what was the response? Were there any other readers joining in the conversation? And what was the stopping point of the particular conversation?

The usage of links on blogs, however, is not as straightforward as a list of links returned by a search of using google. Research and experience both suggest that bloggers in different contexts use the link function differently. For example, a word or a sentence within the texts may provide a link to a site, another article in or out of the blog, to give evidence, to challenge, or to provide the background to the narrative. Sometimes links also play the role of expressing irony or declaring a position (Myers, 2010). Based on this understanding, I prepared myself not to treat links simply at face value, but to take the usage of the link into account as well. To make this point clear, here I provide a made-up example. There is a sentence saying 'if these saints win this battle, it will be impossible for us to teach our children in the future' in a blog, and the words 'these saints' were set as a link to a Non-Governmental Organisation (NGO)'s website which urges the Taiwanese

government to ban corporal punishment at schools. In this example, considering the argument from the linked site, I should see the word ‘saints’ as being used to express irony, and I would assume that this blogger considered that it is necessary for teachers to have the right to use corporal punishment with schoolchildren.

### 3.2.4 Interwoven Contents

Although I have discussed the three dimensions above separately, these three dimensions are usually woven together in blogs. For example, it is possible to encounter an entry containing the blogger’s personal experience and original opinion with a picture on the side; a link was set to a news item discussing the related issue; there were different comments left and the blogger replied some of them. In this case, a story was told, a point of view was stated, a conversation took place, photographs were taken and displayed, and, finally, news/book reading tastes were revealed, all in one and the same blog entry. These different but interwoven formats of documents have strong referential value in terms of their intertextuality, which is seldom seen in other kinds of document. To take advantage of this feature, as discussed above, I imported ideas from a variety of analytical methods to help me to generate knowledge from my data. In the next section, I introduce my approaches and decision making in the steps of data collection.

## 3.3 Data Collection

Although I positioned this research somewhere between Netnography and documentary research, and somewhat closer to documentary research, the baby blog was still seen as a field. In the considering of identifying valid blogs to study, some ethnography considerations were also inferred. The data collection process included three main steps: 1. identify a suitable way of entering the field; 2. decide on the

method for selecting blogs in the field, and 3. collect data from the internet onto my hard disk. These steps are described in sequence below.

### 3.3.1 Entrance of the Field

Li and Walejko (2008) outlined four main methods of selecting blogs for social research: using samples self-selected by bloggers; selecting from blog hosts; selecting from aggregator or indexing services; and selecting from blog lists and blog rings (a blog ring is a group of blogs which provide links to each other, usually having a similar theme or topic). These methods, although proposed principally for quantitative approaches, have also been adopted by qualitative researchers (e.g., Hookway, 2008; Snee, 2010). Researchers often used search engines in the early stages to identify a suitable entrance (host) or target blogs. However, owing to the characteristics of my target blogs, I did not take this widely used route. I define baby blog as a blog in which the blogger uses the baby's name or nickname to name the blog. Since the names were so various, it was difficult to locate them using search engines. With regard to using key words to search, in an ethnography study, the appropriate key words are found by conducting the research, not by the researcher's assumptions before he or she enters the field (Agar, 2008). For this reason, I could not predict key words that I could use in the search engines. With regard to using indexing as the method of entry, because these lists are generated by a third party who does not always ask for permission to add a blog to the list, whether or not the listed blogs are actually open to the public is debatable.

In order to meet my requirement that the bloggers themselves must have made their blogs open to the public, I turned my attention to two of the popular blog competitions in Taiwan. There were two big annual blog awards in Taiwan (neither of the two competitions were being held any longer), one started in 2005, the other 2007, both of which welcomed bloggers from any blog service provider, including self-hosted blogs. These two competitions both required the bloggers to enrol on their own behalf and to put up a 'participant' logo on their own blogs to confirm the

authenticity of their signing up. On the blog awards' official websites, they provided not only the winners' blog links, but also those of all the other participants. Recognising the possibility of accessing a reasonably large number of blogs from different hosts, all of which had clearly stated their willingness to make their blogs public, I decided to enter the field using these two blog awards. They were:

1, China Times Global Chinese Blog Awards

(<http://blogaward.chinatimes.com/2011/index.aspx>): Hosted by one of the biggest print media in Taiwan, China Times, they were the first awards of this kind in Taiwan.

2, Blogger Top 100 (<http://iii.xinmedia.com/>): Held by the Institute for Information Industry. Institute for Information Industry is a NGO, jointly sponsored by the Taiwanese government and private enterprises, and that has been engaged in the development of information technology (IT) and information and communications technology (ICT) in Taiwan since 1979.

In one of the competitions there was a 'parents, children and family' category, and in the other there was a 'parents and children' category, and both of these usually contained baby blogs. After checking the most recent winners in these two lists, I found that 12 out of 16 were run by a parent: five fathers and seven mothers, and four of the parent-run blogs were in the child's name. In all, I could access three father-run baby blogs from the lists (please refer to the appendix for more details of these 16 blogs). I therefore deemed this to be a suitable way of entering the field that would enable me to locate the blogs I needed. However, because these lists would provide only the blogs of those bloggers who were willing to enter a competition, they might not necessarily be very diverse. In spite of this, taking into account my consideration regarding whether or not the blogs were open to the public, I decided to accept, but also to acknowledge this inevitable limitation.



### 3.3.2 Selection of Blogs

When selecting ‘samples’ for an ethnography study, most scholars agree that after becoming familiar with the field site, researchers will generally build up ideas of what (including time, locations, events and people) to sample to fit their research purposes (Agar, 2008; Patton, 2002; Schatzman & Strauss, 1973). The research design will be then shaped “by the time the researcher has available to him, by his framework, by his starting and developing interests, and by any restrictions placed upon his observations by his hosts” (Schatzman & Strauss, 1973, p. 39). Following these suggestions, child raising was the ‘event’ in this research, and in the previous section I discussed the ‘location’ (entrance). In this section, I discuss my selection of people (blogs) and time (age range of the children), and present my final selection.

#### Selection of People (Blogs)

As mentioned in Chapter 2, the notion of ‘doing parenthood’ suggests that the role of fathers and mothers (and their understanding of childhood) are produced and reproduced in daily practices. In this research ‘new father’ bloggers were selected to capture expressions of the experience of being a first-time father. When selecting blogs, an important consideration is that of abandoned blogs. When sampling blogs, researchers have encountered the difficulty of how to avoid including abandoned blogs (Li & Walejko, 2008): the kind of blog that the blogger had stopped updating but it was still left on the internet. In the field of baby blogs, the reason people stop updating is more complex than that they have simply ‘given up’ or ‘lost interest’. For example, when I was designing my process of selection, one of the bloggers posted an entry announcing that his first child had asked him to stop blogging him (the child) openly. At the same time, I have seen other baby blogs stopped for other told or untold reasons. In general, I assume that the stopped baby blogs are different from

the ‘one-day wonders’. My conclusion was therefore as follows: if the child had called a halt to the blog, it suggested that the child did not want to be shown in public anymore; therefore, if I found any evidence that the child had in fact called a halt to the blog, or indicated that he or she no longer wanted to be blogged openly, I excluded the blog out of respect for the child’s wishes. However, with regard to blogs that were stopped for other reasons, I still acknowledged their potential for providing rich information and included them in the list.

### **Selection of Time (Age Range of the First Child)**

My plan for exploring these baby blogs was to collect data from a particular range (of the first child’s age) to enable me to see any changes or differences in the understanding and practices of fatherhood and childhood over time. In order to be able to make comparisons between blogs, I selected blogs which covered the same age range of the child. I set the starting point of the age of the first child in the household as 0, and the ending point as 3. In addition, as literature has shown that parents start to express the joy of having a baby before the child is born, for example, by sharing the ultrasound photos online (Leaver, 2015a), if there are entries recorded that pregnancy, these entries were also included in the collection up to the date when the news of the pregnancy was posted. The reason behind this decision is the understanding of the interaction as an important aspect of social constructionism. As mentioned in Chapter 1, a survey conducted by the government revealed that 54.9% of children under 3 years old were cared for mainly by the mother, while 57.61% of children aged between 3 and 6 years old were in public or private day nurseries and only 26.32% of them were taken care of by their mothers (DGBAS, 2010a).

Although in these statistics fathers were invisible, the results suggested that my opportunities to encounter fathers with the child in the same household through the weekdays would be increased twofold if I set the age range of the blogged child at between 0 and 3 years. In one of my selected blogs, in the selected period, the girl had another two younger sisters, and the entries about her sisters were also included in this research. My decision regarding the age range thus gave me the opportunity to

compare the father's treatment and understanding of the younger children at the same age with the treatment and understanding expressed by the same blogger when the first child was the only child. However, in the end, I found that the father recorded few items about his younger daughters which made the comparison difficult.

## **My Selection**

Having discussed the selection of people and time, the final decision concerned what would be a practical number of blogs to select. My first step was to refer to the winner lists of the most recent year to estimate the possible amount of data I would be dealing with. The estimate may be found in the last column of the table in the appendix. With regard to the three father-run baby blogs I found in the lists, estimates of the number of entries that would be obtained over the three years covered were: 232, 675 and 162. The figures are quite different from each other, but it seemed that they all blogged more frequently than just once a week (a total of 156 entries over a three-year period for each blogger). Taking this number of entries to deal with on each blog and the time frame of this research into account, I decided to choose four blogs (a total of around 600 entries) and study them in depth. In this step, I found that the child had called a halt to one of them. To this point, I took it as a pilot collection. The left two winner blogs were shortlisted, but not yet selected. My consideration was to identify more father-run baby blogs to choose from.

Having decided to select four blogs, I first took the participants in the category (including winners and others) from the list for the most recent year. I skimmed through the titles and the identities of the bloggers (run by the father or the mother), and short-listed my possible target blogs. Secondly, I applied my criteria to shorten the list. The criteria I applied were:

1. The blog is run by the father, but the title is the newborn babies' name or nickname.
2. Blogs cover first child in the family between the ages of 0 and 3.

3. Both active and abandoned blogs were included as long as the recorded child had not called a halt to the blog.

The lists for the most recent year did not provide me with enough father-run baby blogs to select from, so I decided to apply a second round of selection by enlarging the pool to include a previous year, and took the same steps to make up the shortfall. However, in this process of selecting my blogs, these two awards both decided to stop any future activity and removed parts of the lists and archive from online assessment. After using the email addresses left on their websites to contact them, I obtained limited (not comprehensive) lists of participants from both awards. Combined with my earlier backups, I then had a list of 206 blogs. After applying my criteria, there were only four accessible blogs that fit all of them.

Among the four blogs, one of them was run by someone I had known for many years. Not only did I used to read this blog years before, I also knew this family quite well off-line. And from what I knew about the blogger, for me to use his blog as part of my research material would cause a high degree of tension in our relationship. However, because I had only four blogs in my shortlist, I decided to include it for the time being, and to postpone the weighing of the pros and cons until after first round of reading and coding. The data from this blog were also collected using the same method discussed in Section 3.3.3. My consideration was: although I did not use the form of interview nor was I physically participating in the field to collect my data, the fact that I knew the blogger well might provide me with some of the advantages of insider research; for instance, it might give me deeper understanding than an outsider would be able to gain (Edwards, 2002; Taylor, 2011).

However, after the second round of reading and coding, I found that those possible benefits had turned into shortcomings. After conducting a review of the coding, I found that many of the notes I had made on this blog were not based on the data, but were based on my knowledge of this family. This not only reflected my limited ability to shift my position between that of insider and that of outsider, but also weakened the findings: they would either be over-interpreted, or limited by my experiences and prejudgments (Oakley, 1998). After reviewing all the concepts that I generated from the four cases, I found that his blog provided a limited number of

new concepts, and I judged that I should have sufficient data even if I excluded his blog. Weighing the gains and losses, I decided to drop his blog from this project.

To give the reader a clearer idea of the context that will help with the understanding of the discussion in later chapters, here I introduce the three remaining blogs that were used for this research. For the purpose of keeping the recorded children's identities anonymous, the names of the bloggers and the children are not exact translations, but are codes I set. The considerations of giving the bloggers their author's credits or to keep the recorded child anonymous are discussed in Section 3.5.2. The titles of the blogs are also not exact translations. I renamed the titles using words with close connections to the original titles. The exception is Dylan's Blog, for which I only replaced the child's name and kept the original format because I considered this format to be descriptive. Since 'blog' is a common noun on the internet, when the name of a blog entitled 'someone's blog' has been changed, it is very unlikely to be recognised through its title.

#### 1. Documentary of Rosie's Growing (Rosie was born in 2009)

After he had his first daughter, Rosie-pa (this is how he referred to himself and is also how he was addressed by his readers in the blog) started the blog in the daughter's name, and called it Documentary of Rosie's Growing. This family later had two more daughters, but the stories about the two younger sisters, Amy and Emily, were put under the same category of Rosie's growing. The early entries in this blog focused more on Rosie, but the focus later turned into their gatherings with other families. When Rosie was six months old, Rosie-pa advertised in his blog that he would like to find similar aged playmates for his daughter. This attracted two or three families in the first few gatherings, and the gathering was later called a 'playgroup' (this is the English word he used, not my translation) by Rosie-pa. The playgroup was arranged by the father to visit different attractions or provide different activities such as birthday parties. Although the playgroup was arranged by Rosie-pa, in his writings, the nominal leader of the group is his first daughter: Rosie. By the

time Rosie was three, this playgroup had attracted tens of families to participate, and had been reported by an online magazine.

## 2. Ruby's Online Dowry (Ruby was born in 2009)

This blogger referred to himself as Daddy Tom (his own user name with the identity of a father), and his wife as Mummy Jane (instead of 'Ruby's mum') in the blog. According to his blog entries, he had been diagnosed with cancer before Ruby was born, and the cancer was under control. Ruby was the only child in this family. During the first three years, the father kept the diary frequently and marked every entry with the child's age from year to day (e.g. 2 years 3 months and 8 days old). He blogged *every day* continuously from the birth of the child until the child was 4 months old. After that, he still kept the diary frequently. He produced more than two hundred and fifty entries in the first year and more than one hundred in the second year. The frequency in the third year was less, but there was still at least one entry every week. Apart from everyday diaries, he also produced monthly reviews and annual reviews.

## 3. Dylan's Blog (Dylan was born in 2005)

Dylan's father used 'I' in the blog to refer to himself, but, in some cases, he was called Dylan-pa by his readers in the comments. Dylan was the only son in this family and he was diagnosed with autism at the age of two and a half. A year after the diagnosis, the father started this blog. This blog (for the parts I used which cover the record from 0-3 years of the child's age) contains two main parts. The first part is a series of diaries that were written before the diagnosis. These entries were originally written by hand and later typed and put online. The second part is a series of records of the child's symptoms and developments as well as the father's handling of these. In this part, the entries were written based on his records and memory, and the entries were divided into different topics such as mood disorder, watching TV, learning to swim, cognitive development, non-verbal interactions, and so on.

### 3.3.3 Data Collection Software

After selecting the four blogs to study, the next step was to collect the raw data. To prevent any further editing of the selected blogs by the bloggers, I collected the four blogs from the internet onto my hard disk drive. In this research, the raw data are the blog entries: including the contents (text and visual files embedded) and all the comments left by their readers. My target was to collect them in a form which keeps most, if not all, of the original outward appearances and in a format that I could import to NVivo for further works. My original plan was to take two steps to collect the data. First, I planned to use HTTrack Website Copier (<http://www.httrack.com/>) to download the selected blogs and use the downloaded version as my raw data. Second, I planned to use NCapture, a web page converter developed by the development team of NVivo, to convert the pages I needed (from the raw data) into PDF files and import them to NVivo. However, in the end, I chose FireShot, another free webpage capture extension for web browsers, to operate the two steps. In this section, I introduce the process of data collection, mainly the experiences of trying out different software and web browser extensions, especially the problems I encountered, the advantages and disadvantages of some extensions, and explain each of my decisions.

#### HTTrack

HTTrack Website Copier is a freeware. I used to use it for off-line browsing some years ago when the internet was not as convenient as it is now. By using this software, users can download a whole website, disconnect the telephone line, and read the materials without being connected to the internet. Although it had been some years since I had last used this software, after checking their website and finding that newer versions had recently been released, I assumed the software was

still current (they kept updating it) and was capable of dealing with modern websites such as blogs. However, the attempt was not as smooth as I expected. In practice, it is usual for bloggers to store photograph and video files on another site (for example flickr for images and Youtube for video clips) and to embed the visual files in the content. This fact made it necessary for me to setup HTTrack to download files outside the domain name as well. It increased the number of target files by several times: for example, those of commercial advertisements and the target webpages of the links would all be included. My first attempt took me days of non-stop downloading, with more than 11 gigabytes of data being downloaded, and the project was still in progress. In order to confirm that the downloaded files were usable for this research, I paused the downloading and checked, and found some other problems. First, HTTrack had failed to download two of the four blogs. Second, in one of the partly downloaded blogs, the catalogues did not appear in the same way as in the original blog. This made it impossible for me to access the contents as I wished, and made this backup useless. I stopped the project, selected different options and tried again, but the problems remained. After three failures (using different settings), I speculated that HTTrack would not be of use in this research. At this point, I reviewed my original plan and re-considered the necessity of this step: even if I could find other software or means to back up these four blogs, I would still need to convert the pages to a format which I could handle with NVivo. After consulting online forums and taking into consideration the fact that all the four blogs were live (new entries were being added continuously), I decided to skip this step and started to capture the pages I needed directly online. If I stored the captured pages in a folder structure identical to the catalogue of the blog, I would be able technically to regain workable backup versions of the selected blogs.

## **NCapture**

To capture webpages and organise them with NVivo, my first choice was NCapture, an extension to a browser, which in my case was Google Chrome, developed by the NVivo team for online data collection purposes. However, for some reason, I could



not make NCapture work smoothly. When I was collecting my data, there were two main steps in using NCapture: first, you capture a webpage using the extension in the browser and the page will be saved as a NVCX file. Second, you have to import the NVCX file into the NVivo project. This is when the NVCX files are converted into PDF files.

In my first attempt, I started with the blog, the catalogue of which could not be shown by using HTTrack. I tried to capture some pages in a particular catalogue. It worked very well, but I noticed that apart from NVivo, there was no other software which was capable of handling NVCX files. When I tried to import the NVCX files into NVivo, I found the success rate was low and unstable. After a successful attempt to capture and import a single page, I tried to use the same steps to import more pages, but in the first round of importing those, only 30 out of 50 files were converted successfully. I tried to convert those failed files again: some more, but not all, files were converted successfully. In total, I repeated the same process of importing the same 50 files eight times and finally had them all converted. The fact that a file could be converted on one occasion but not on another led me to suspect that this function of NVivo was not yet stable, at least for dealing with the webpages in this research.

After checking the imported files and trying to work with them (for example, to code a selection of text), I encountered two additional problems. First, the fonts were not converted correctly: they were too small and difficult to read. Second, the layout of the pages had not been recognised correctly: when I wanted to select a portion of text, objects (text or image) in the next column (or frame) would also be selected. These problems were annoying, but were not totally unacceptable. In order to determine whether this process would be suitable for the whole project or not, I tried the same process with another selected blog and found that the software could not capture the webpage at all: after several hours, the process of capturing a single page was still in progress (it took seconds to capture a page on another blog). Since there were not many options to set in NCapture, and it was impossible to adjust the way NVivo converts a NVCX file, I could only conclude that NCapture would not be of

much help to me in this project. At this point, I decided to give up NCapture and turned to other webpage capture extensions.

### **Other Webpage Capture Extensions**

In all, I tried five different extensions for Google Chrome to capture webpages as PDF files. “Web2PDFConverter” and “iWeb2x” were both capable of capturing usable PDF files on one of the blogs: although the fonts were not correctly converted, the layout was correct. In this way, they were both better than NCapture. However, they both failed to capture photographs embedded in contents on another two blogs. I contacted the development teams for these extensions, but they were unable to find a way of solving the problem at that time. “Save as PDF” performed in a similar way to the above two extensions, but the results were not as good: the layout was not correct and the default settings for their freeware version (when I used it, you needed to pay to access the function to change capture options) generated PDF files in landscape direction. This made the PDF files big (for example, if it takes five pages to generate a webpage in portrait direction, it will take more than twelve pages to do so in landscape direction) and they were difficult to read easily.

An extension called “Print Friendly and PDF any Webpage” performed well, on the other hand. It generated PDF files from the part of the content on each page. In the process, I could also delete parts I did not need; for example, commercial advertisements inserted by the service provider (not the blogger). By doing this, it was possible to generate a clean and smaller PDF file. The only problem was that the part of the comments below each entry were set to be excluded in default and I could not find way to change this setting.

In the end, I decided to use “FireShot” to capture each webpage. The PDF file generated by FireShot was actually an image file, similar to a screen shot of the original webpage, therefore the fonts, image files, layout, comments and emoticons were all in the correct positions. The two obvious shortcomings of using image files

as my raw data were: first, I lost the opportunity to search through the text; second, if a linkage was embedded in the text, I lost the ability to click on it and to see the target page. My consideration was: in this project, even if I had the raw data in text form, the data are Han characters. In later stages, I would still need to add notes, codes and translation in English when needed, for each piece of raw data. In this sense, an image file is not too far away from a Han character text file. Furthermore, NVivo is capable of selecting an area on an image file to code and to add notes. After some test runs, I found that using image files that were generated by FireShot was the easiest and most precise way, compared to handling a text form PDF file with the wrong layout generated by the extensions mentioned above. Weighing up the advantages and disadvantages, I determined that FireShot would be the most suitable extension for me to collect my raw data in this project. I then used FireShot to capture every target entry in my selected (at this stage) four blogs, saved them as PDF files, and imported them in to NVivo.

In this section I have described in detail how I obtained the data for this research. In the following section, the method of data analysis is explained.

### **3.4 Data Analysis**

In this section, I introduce the steps I took in arranging and analysing the data. I adopted the analysis method framework developed by Ritchie, Spencer and O'Connor (2003) to conduct my analysis. The data management software NVivo was used in the process of data analysis.

In the previous section I described the problems I encountered during data collection and the reasons for my final choice of software: each blog entry was captured and saved as an image PDF file. Since I had failed to harvest the blogs in their original structure, I had to rebuild the structure myself. After the entries were captured, they were stored in a folder which had the same structure as the blogs.

The first step I took was to read them thoroughly. In the process of reading, possible themes and concepts were identified and recorded. The first layer of indexing started based on the three threads in this research:

1. Childhood
2. Fatherhood
3. the Blog and the internet

After each file had been read, I imported it into NVivo. When I imported the files, two kinds of tree node were constructed. The first one, blog, was to rebuild the structure of the blog. The second one, theme, was to organise the various themes and sub-concepts that had been identified so they could be analysed later. In practice, the file was first imported into NVivo in the order of the blogs and a blog tree node was established. If the entry or sections in the entry were identified as coming under particular themes and/or sub-concepts, I added the nodes (coded) to the theme tree node, and applied the value to the entry or the sections in NVivo. To reduce the risk of losing context and narrative flow, I coded my data into bigger chunks (for instance, I coded an entry or a paragraph instead of a sentence, or I coded a photograph with the caption and texts related to it) to retain the context. When a passage was identified as being related to two or more concepts, I multi-coded the passage. After this step, other main themes, such as motherhood and off-line activities, emerged. Under each main theme, some sub-concepts, such as toys, gender, educational materials, competition, memory, health and traditional and religious practices, were identified and added to the entries and/or paragraph selections. Some notes were also added to the entries. After the first round of reading, importing and coding, the structure of the four blogs was rebuilt and a framework was constructed in NVivo. After this, I proceeded to a second round of reading which also followed the structure order. In this round, some sub-concepts that had been identified later were added to entries that had been imported earlier. This was also when I realised that my coding and notes on the blog run by someone I knew well were biased and decided to exclude that blog from this research.

In the third round of reading, I used the function provided by NVivo to read the selected entries and sections under different themes and sub-concepts. After this, my plan was to use NVivo to sort the data further into a shorter thematic charts by putting paragraphs containing the same concept together. However, owing to the method of data collection, my raw data files were image files, not text files. It would have been inefficient to reselect all the files again, so I decided to keep them as they were, and started to unpack the content of the data and re-organise them into categories in a conceptual way.

Although I used English to construct the thematic framework, I did not translate or interpret before this stage. The main reason for this was based on the understanding of the differences between English and Chinese. While English is a ‘writer-responsible’ language, Chinese is a ‘reader-responsible’ language. In other words, in English it is usually considered the writer’s responsibility to lead the reader through the document, while in Chinese it is usually the reader’s responsibility to link the different parts of the document together, which means that in many cases English readers find it difficult to follow direct translations (see Qi & Liu, 2007). To avoid losing the underlying meaning of the sentences or paragraphs in the early stages, I postponed my interpretation until this stage. In this round of reading and re-organising my data, I started to apply my understanding of Chinese to capture any ambiguities and underlying meanings in what was said and how it was said. A descriptive note, my interpretation in English of what the data were indicating, was made using Word (not NVivo). With regards to the data displayed in thesis, I present my way of dealing with the translation in Section 3.6.

In the process of classifying the data and developing the explanatory accounts, I took an ‘analogue’ approach: I printed out my descriptive notes and cut them into pieces. Various concepts were written down on sticky notepaper and moved around on a big piece of paper. In this stage, outside the range of collected data, the question of missing data (for instance, why was the naughty baby absent from the girls’ blogs?) was taken into account. Related discussion, research findings and cultural background were all involved at different points, and some concepts were dropped. Finally, after the concepts I had identified had been grouped into different chapters

and the explanations made, I checked to ensure that they had been generated from the evidence collected in the study, rather than from my own preconceived ideas.

In this section I have introduced the steps I took when I conducted my analysis. The findings of the analysis are discussed in Chapter 4 to 6. In the next section I discuss the ethical considerations in related to this research and my decision of displaying the data in this thesis.

## **3.5 Ethical Considerations and Displaying the Data**

### **3.5.1 The Public Nature of Blogs**

In this research, I selected public blogs and observed them without obtaining the consent of the bloggers. The consideration was: in the case of a public blog, whether one sees them as performances or as displays, as discussed in Chapter 2, they are the production which the blogger either wants others to observe or does not mind if they do. If we understand narratives as social practices (Fina and Georgakopoulou, 2008), then if the blogger had been aware of my observation, or another interview (either online or off-line) had been arranged, what I would have ended up with would be another set of performances or displays, which were considered by the blogger appropriate to show a researcher (Cotterill, 1992; Allison James & Curtis, 2010). The key question in doing this was whether or not the selected blogs had been made open to the public. Compared with other types of research, the most commonly encountered ethical challenge when conducting research on the internet is the different idea of privacy online. For example, even in forums that are accessible by the public, many users still perceive their interaction to be private (Markham, 2011). Especially on sensitive issues or sites, authenticity, trust and ethical concerns are all problematic for researchers (Hine, 2008). With blogs, unlike forums and social networking sites such as Facebook, users are not usually required to join the particular network to be able to view the contents or to make a comment. From one

point of view, blog contents, if not password-protected, are usually seen as public texts (e.g., Interagency Advisory Panel on Research Ethics, 2010).

However, this view does not take into account the digital divide. The term ‘digital divide’ usually refers to the gap or differences between people who have access to information and communication technologies (ICT) inside a community, within a country or even on an international level (e.g., Chinn & Fairlie, 2004). However, for those who have access to ICT, Gurstein (2003) suggested that there still exists a kind of knowledge or skill gap between different users. He thus argued that not only access, but ‘effective use’ (or not) should be included in any consideration of the ‘digital divide’. Researchers have suggested that there are bloggers who use blogs as a private space to share information with limited audiences such as friends and family only (Eastham, 2011; Li & Walejko, 2008). Just because a blog looks like a public blog (i.e., it is not password-protected) does not necessarily mean it is a public one. In some cases, it is simply because the blogger does not know how to set up a password for entries. Based on this consideration, my research selected self-claimed public blogs from two blog awards in Taiwan. Although this selection method ensured that I select ‘public’ blogs, on the other hand, it meant that I missed all those bloggers who had no intention of taking part in the competitions. In the process of weighing the advantages against the disadvantages, I decided to accord prime importance to the consideration regarding the public nature of the blogs.

### **3.5.2 The Blogger’s Credit versus the Privacy of the Recorded Child**

Another ethical consideration relevant to this research involved the privacy and anonymity of the bloggers, and those of the recorded child. It is normally suggested that researchers should protect the privacy of the participants in their research, but a key question that traditionally troubles internet researchers seems to be ‘how to treat online texts’. Are they public texts? Or are they human subjects as well (Markham, 2011)? Although it is left to the researcher to decide, for research on blogs, scholars

tend to suggest that researchers recognise bloggers as human subjects (Kozinets, 2012; Markham & Buchanan, 2012). What is more, with regard to public blogs, if we treat the contents as the ‘published work’ of the bloggers, as Leggatt-Cook and Chamberlain (2011) argued, researchers should give the bloggers an author’s credit. From this perspective, anonymity is not needed, or even not right, because it will take the authors’ credit away from them. In the case of my research, which selected award participants as the sample, the blogs and contents had been promoted by the bloggers and were intended to be read by a non-specified audience. In this case, it would be fair to give the authors credit for their published works. However, mainly because their blog titles and contents included their children’s names, and photographs and personal information such as growing charts, I reconsidered the privacy of the blogger and the recorded child.

We can see privacy and anonymity as two different levels. Janlori Goldman (1999) argued that information privacy is formed by two components: the right to be alone (away from the world, government, community and family), and the right to control information about oneself. In the case of public baby blogs, those recorded babies clearly have little say (yet) about their privacy, but the information is leaked by their parents. Under the legal framework in Taiwan (Civil Code), any individual under the age of seven “shall be represented by his guardian for making or receiving and expression of intent” (Ministry of Justice, 2012b). In other words, parents are supposed to be the last line of defence of their children’s privacy. For the parents to include their children in the blog is therefore legally acceptable, but it is not ethically uncontested for me as a researcher to represent them again in my research. For example, what if the children do not like being shown in public? In consideration of this question, as I have discussed in my selection of blogs, I decided to exclude those blogs which the child had called a halt to, but what about the selected blogs?

After consulting the Ethical Decision-making and Internet Research 2.0 document produced by the AOIR Ethics Working Committee (Markham & Buchanan, 2012), my main concern was: what I, as a researcher, should do is to prevent any possible further harm coming to them through my research. With regard to the bloggers, the potential harm of publicity to the blogger, if any, should be a matter of his own



consideration and decision. However, this is not the case with the recorded child. As a result, I decided to maintain the anonymity of the bloggers in order to prevent the recorded child from being linked to him or her in this thesis. When quoting and referring to selected data, I used a code, instead of the name, nickname, or internet user name of the blogger. With regard to visual data, although I collected the photographs in the blogs and decided to display some of them in this thesis to provide the context to or evidence for my findings, when any child was featured in the picture frame, the picture was ‘transformed’ into textual description. There was a case in which the child was not in the picture, but the child’s name was on the graph. In this case, I marked out the child’s name before I displayed it in the thesis.

What I have done (using codes) is to make it difficult to identify the blogged child in this thesis, and to prevent a search using the child’s name being led to by this thesis. This decision affected the bloggers’ credit of authorship in some ways. However, it is impossible to guarantee anonymity, especially in an age, as I pointed out in Chapter 2, when online identities are networked and searchable (boyd, 2010). For example, quotations from these sites were likely to be identifiable. Even if translation was involved, through an examination of my selection process and the information obtained from the description, there was a chance that the selected blogs could be identified. In this case, it would be possible to recover the author’s credit by a search on the internet. Of course, the child’s information that was exposed by the father would then be reached by this search, but that would be out of my control. And, if any harm had been caused to the child by publicity, it would have been caused by the fathers when they blogged them.

### **3.6 Displaying the Data**

Having discussed ethical considerations and my decision regarding displaying the child in this thesis, here I address my other decisions on displaying the data in this thesis.

The first issue concerns the translation. As I mentioned in 3.4, there are differences between English and Chinese (Qi & Liu, 2007). In this thesis, all extracted texts were originally written in Chinese and they were translated into English by me. They were not directly translated word for word, but were rearranged into English sentences that would make sense. I double-checked my translations and the original texts before I displayed them in the thesis to ensure that the idea was correctly expressed and not over-interpreted to the best of my understanding of both languages. There were cases when I could not find an exact English phrase to translate the Chinese phrase. In these instances, I included the original Han characters and added an explanation to the choice of English phrase.

The second decision involved the description of quotations and extracts. Since my data covered a three-year period and were taken from different blogs, it would be helpful, and would be the easiest way, for readers to understand the context if I indicated the date of the entry that had been blogged. However, I found that many entries in Dylan's blog had been blogged on the same date. One possible reason for this, as I mentioned in 3.3.2, was that part of Dylan's blog was originally written offline and later typed online. Another possible reason is that Dylan's blog was originally set in another host and later moved to the one I collected. The published date may have been the day Dylan's father moved the blog. For either reason, to indicate the different entries of Dylan's stories at different ages would only cause further confusion to the reader if the same date were indicated (for example, a story about Dylan aged seven months, dated 21.09.2009; another story about Dylan aged one year and four months, also dated 21.09.2009). To maintain consistency in displaying my data, therefore, I decided to take out the date indication of extracts from the other two blogs. Instead, I added descriptions, such as when Rosie was at her second birthday party, to the extracts to give the context of the extracts.

### 3.7 Positioning the Researcher

In this Chapter I have introduced my understanding of blog contents and the methods which have been developed and conducted to generate knowledge from the data. In this final section, I discuss the position of the researcher and its influences to this research. It has been suggested that it is impossible for researchers to be neutral or value-free (Mason, 2002). When discussing the issues of insiders and outsiders in the production of knowledge, Merton (1972) quoted Max Weber's notion of *Wertbeziehung* which suggests that "differing social locations, with their distinctive interests and values, will affect the selection of problems for investigation" (Merton, 1972, p. 16). Scholars have also reminded us that not only the problems selected to be investigated, but also the ways of participating in the field, the ways of representing the study subjects (Clifford, 1986; Pratt, 1986) and the knowledge produced (Tisdall, Davis, & Gallagher, 2009) are also influenced by the researcher's position and background. Therefore, it has been highlighted that, in the process of doing the fieldwork (Blaisdell, 2015) and when analysing (Mauthner & Doucet, 2003) and displaying (Clifford, 1986; Pratt, 1986) the data, a researcher should maintain a reflexive relationship between him or herself and the subjects of his or her research concerns (Griffith, 1998).

In the process of doing this research, especially in the steps of analysing the data, I reminded myself to be constantly aware of the influence my standpoints may have on the findings. The issue of outsiders and/or insiders was always important to me. It has been mentioned by various scholars that if a researcher is an insider, he or she has a connection with the people under study in terms of location, position, experiences and oppression (Mason, 2002); thus he or she might be able to claim 'epistemological privilege' (Almack, 2008; Griffith, 1998), which gives the insider researcher a deeper understanding of the people than an outsider would be able to gain (Edwards, 2002; Taylor, 2011). There are methods that have been developed based on this assumption: for example, the 'cultural frames' analysis proposed by

Fisher (1997). This process shares the view that a researcher with same cultural background has a better chance of understanding and of making sense of the phenomena he or she studies. The frame Fisher mentioned was influenced by Erving Goffman. Goffman (1974) argued that different cultures generate ‘primary frameworks’ to render “what would otherwise be a meaningless aspect of the scene into something that is meaningful” (p. 21). Goffman argued there are two kinds of primary framework: social frameworks, which are socially constructed, and natural frameworks, which are generated from people’s physical experiences. People apply these frameworks to make sense of the world, but are not necessarily aware of it. In Fisher’s (1997) view, the ways in which frames develop vary in different cultural backgrounds, and in many cases can only be made sense of by the members of the culture in question. In general, cultural frames “provide a “common sense” pattern that systematically shapes the way we interpret images by drawing our attention to some aspects... while encouraging us to ignore others” (6.1). During the process of analysing my data, I found myself benefiting from having the same cultural background as the Taiwanese father bloggers. The issues of filial obedience and competition I discuss in Chapter 6 were identified with the help of Fisher’s cultural frames analysis.

However, it was also important to remember that being an insider could lead the researcher into a blind spot in which he or she also ignores the same things as the people he or she is studying, or takes the same things for granted (Almack, 2008; Griffith, 1998). Also, over-emphasising the insiders’ benefits could narrow the possibilities of research that are open when it is conducted from different points of view. As Merton (1972) argued, this could end up producing the kind of claim that only black can study black, only men can study men, and women, women. Willie (2013) took the same point of view as Merton and argued that outsiders should not be excluded from the research, as outsiders have no insiders’ sensibilities to protect, thus different insights may be obtained. In this study, as I mentioned in Section 3.3.2, when I found that one of the selected blogs was run by someone I knew personally, I initially found that being an insider gave me the benefit of understanding the blog better; however, I later found that the existence of our relationship meant I was biased when attempting to understand the data. I could not help but bring my

experiences of my personal interactions with the blogger's family into the analysis, and it also caused me to over-interpret my analysis notes on his case.

At the same time, I also found myself being an outsider. Although I see myself as a Taiwanese father blogger too, since being a father is a process of learning from doing, the fact that I raised my children in another cultural environment, the UK, distanced me from the child raising environment the father bloggers were in. It made the stories told by the fathers in this research familiar, but at the same time strange to me. This distance, as I also mentioned in Chapter 1, triggered my interest in this research, and also gave me the opportunity to read and to understand the data differently. For example, if I had been raising my children in Taiwan and following the practices suggested by the government just like the fathers in my research, I think my understanding of the data would have been different. In the end, I failed to position myself, the researcher, on either the inside or the outside. Or, as Ramazanoglu and Holland (2002) argued, even though some aspects of my background or identity overlapped with those of the people I was studying, the fact that I was the researcher was enough to make me an outsider.

Finally, this acknowledgement of the importance of defining one's position and my own failure to do so is not an attempt to excuse failure. Rather, it reminded me to deal with my data more carefully so that a valid study would be possible. Again, I believe this was also influenced by my background in journalism, which taught me that there is no such thing as an objective report; what a reporter should do is to present as many sides of the same story as possible to give readers the information they need to make their own judgements. In the following chapters, I discuss my findings in three topics, they are: Chapter 4, blogging and the digital representation of fatherhood; Chapter 5, rearing a normal child, and Chapter 6, nurturing a Taiwanese child.

## Chapter 4 Blogging and the Digital Representation of Fatherhood

### 4.1 Introduction

As discussed in the review of relevant literature in Chapter 2, the ways of understanding the concept of the online community are constantly developing in line with the rapid development of various online services. In this development, most of the recent literature (mainly Western) on how mothers use the internet has emphasised the positive side of this development. For example, scholars have found that the internet provides individuals with the opportunity to travel (virtually) and to meet people beyond geographic boundaries, and to obtain social support from and a sense of community with other online members (see, for example, Holloway & Valentine, 2003; Thompson-Hayes, 2011). Through blogging (and later social media such as Facebook and Twitter), mothers not only created their identities (Cole & Renegar, 2016), but also received emotional support (Smolinski, 2016; Stamm, Yu, & Kennedy, 2016; Veazey, 2016), exchanged information with each other (Drentea & Moren-Cross, 2005), and even helped each other to improve their child rearing methods (Zhang, 2011). With regard to the hope of using the internet to meet (virtually) other parents in the same shoes, Thompson-Hayes' (2011) research on parents with autistic children, Veazey's (2016) research on migrant mothers and Smolinski's (2016) research on military mothers have all suggested that a community and supporting network were formed online.

There have been similar findings from the limited research into how fathers use the internet. Stay-at-home fathers use online discussion groups to seek social support, by “vent[ing] their daily frustrations, see[ing] how others have handled similar situations, and [...] just chat[ing] with other men” (Livesay, 2011, p. 174). One research that used blogs to analyse the experience of first-time fathers also similarly suggested that, when first-time fathers are looking for a modern version of fatherhood which is different from that of their own fathers, blogs can be seen as a

tool that “can give men an opportunity to strengthen their identities as fathers through interaction with others in the same life situation” (Åsenhed, et al. 2014, p. 1315). In short, from the research on motherhood and fatherhood online, we can see that the interacting nature of the internet and blogs have been highlighted and, as a result of this publishing and interaction, an identity of parenthood has been constructed.

This chapter follows this thread to discuss the fatherhood shown in the three blogs used in this research. The discussion is divided into two parts. In the first part, blogging is understood as a (new) component of doing fatherhood and the focus of the discussion is on blogging rather than on the content of blogs. Through an analysis of the fathers’ ways of using the blogs, I found that the online interaction was not as lively as that found in other research. Nevertheless, these fathers’ not-so-lively way of using the internet does serve the purpose of confirming the family relationships to their readers, with the hope that it will do the same for their children (in the future).

Since previous research has suggested that the concept of a good father, in terms of both role and image, in Taiwanese society is undergoing changes (Chao, 2011b; Hsu, 2005; Mo, 1997), the second part of this chapter focuses on the content of the blogs and discusses the digitally represented roles of the fathers. Although these blogs were written by the fathers, which may suggest that they tend more towards the ‘new good father’ end of the spectrum, I demonstrate, through a description of the roles of the father as shown in these blogs, that the version of the ‘old’ good father is still more influential.

## 4.2 Blogging and the Online Community

In this section, I discuss blogging as a (new) component of doing fatherhood and examine the fathers’ usage of the blog. In addition to the easy publishing function the technology provides, I follow the threads of the interactive nature of the internet to discuss this doing of fatherhood. As pointed out in Chapter 2, the on/off-line concept

has been changing over the past few years. The increase in the number of online services, the variety of technological devices, and the different usages of the internet have blurred the boundary between on and off-line. Considering the three blogs used in this research were started in 2005 (Dylan), 2009 (Ruby) and 2009 (Rosie), the discussion in this section joins the discussion of the on/off-line boundary and adds examples of this development of the use of the internet.

### 4.2.1 Isolated Blogs

Technology wise, blogs can be seen as a tool for publishing and organising texts and multi-media (Rettberg, 2008). Further, the interactions within a blog (between the blogger and the reader) and between that blog and other blogs (the linkages and interactions between bloggers) were also found to be a characteristic of blogs (Webb & Lee, 2011). Examining the three blogs following this thread, I found that the different fathers in this research benefited from different aspects of the technology offered and used it in their own ways, although the interaction was not as obvious as that found in other research.

In the case of Dylan's blog, for example, Dylan's first year diary was recorded using pen and paper. Dylan's father started the blog after Dylan was diagnosed with autism: he started by recording his parenting experience with Dylan and later typed up all the early handwritten diary entries and put them all in sequence in the blog. We can see how Dylan's father took advantage of the blog software to create and manage a website (Rettberg, 2008). However, for this way of using the blog, we can also see that Dylan's first years diary is closer to a traditional diary (published in one go).

With regard to the purpose of the blog, he wrote:

After my child was diagnosed with autism, I started to search and read related information. I self-educated and experienced how to raise an autistic child. In the process of trial and error, an idea started to grow in my mind: maybe I should start to



record my experience. [...] On the one hand, these records will help me to reflect on and improve [my child training skills] and it would be better for Dylan. On the other hand, if I can educate him to be as normal as others, these records could be helpful for other parents who face the same situation.

From the above extract, we can see that Dylan's father shared the same sense of community (sharing experiences with parents in the same shoes) found in mother blog research (Smolinski, 2016; Thompson-Hayes, 2011; Veazey, 2016). However, from the entries and feedback I examined in the three-year frame in the blog, it appears that this desire to share experiences with other parents was not being fulfilled, or at least the evidence was so slight that it is hard to recognise. Unlike Thompson-Hayes' finding, which suggested that a community and supporting network are formed online for parents with autistic children, there were few interactions recorded in this blog; most of the comments simply expressed sympathy and praise (for the way Dylan's father was coping). No links were established with other blogs or information resources. Dylan's father entered the blog in various blog competitions and won first prize in some of them. However, there are still very few other parents in the same shoes – either parenting a child with autism or being a stay-at-home father – appearing to share, support or even simply chat. His attempt to build a certain kind of (online) community has not so far succeeded, at least as represented in the blog.

The evidence of interacting is even slighter in Ruby's blog. Daddy Tom started the blog after Mummy Jane became pregnant, and the purpose was "to keep beautiful memories for our girl [not yet named]". From the way he wrote, it seems that the expected reader is (the future) Ruby. This is revealed in various parts of the blog, starting with the title of the blog: 'Ruby's online dowry'. The word 'dowry' in the Taiwanese cultural context refers to property – it can be anything, but is usually a large amount of money or a piece of furniture – given by the bride's father's family for her to take to her husband's family on her marriage. The fact that Daddy Tom used the word 'dowry' in the blog title implies that this blog was prepared by the father for his daughter to read in the future. Reading through the blog, there is evidence that supports this assumption. Although some entries read as though they

were written for his other readers, in general, he uses the word ‘you’ a great deal to address Ruby. This way of addressing the child in a parent blog was also found in Western father blog research (Åsenhed et al., 2014). In Åsenhed and colleagues’ analysis, they argued that this way of addressing the child makes the child real to the reader. In the blogs used in this research, however, the child had already been made real to the reader by the title. This style of writing further gives the overall impression that in the blog the father is telling the life story of Ruby to the future Ruby. Another special arrangement is that although he encouraged readers to post comments and to ‘like’ the post (a function similar to the ‘like’ button in Facebook) in order to, in his words, ‘encourage’ Ruby, the comments section was kept private: only the manager of the blog can read them. In other words, the interaction between the blogger and the reader in Ruby’s blog was not traceable by members of the public such as myself.

From these two blogs, we can see that not only were any signs of an online community difficult to find, but also, the ways of using the blog and the purposes of the two blogs were different from each other, and these blogs did not possess all the characteristics of the blog identified by scholars early on. Researchers originally identified three main characteristics of blogs: 1. Original contents posted by the blogger(s); 2. Usually linked to other blogs; 3. Most blogs allow, even encourage, readers to comment (Webb & Lee, 2011). As discussed in Chapter 3, it was argued that the comment feature and linkage between blogs were important characteristics which make the blogosphere an interactive platform (Bruns, 2008; Bruns & Jacobs, 2006). However, in both the blogs mentioned above, I found the linkages with other websites or blogs very weak. I could not find any blog-rolls of other parents/baby blogs or any information sources listed on the front pages or sidebars. In the content, Daddy Tom quite often claimed that ‘this is according to certain research’, or ‘on other parents’ websites’ or ‘according to experts’, but he seldom named his references and never provided the link to the sources. With regard to interactions within the blog, as mentioned above, in Dylan’s blog, evidence of any interaction with other ‘internet users’ was limited, and in Ruby’s blog the public comment function had even been disabled (readers can leave comments but only the blogger can read them).

All these aspects mean that the blog content of the fathers referred to here is closer to traditional personal webpage. And in Dylan's case, the diary of his first-year life is closer to a traditional diary rather than 'the blog' discussed in Chapter 3. In addition, if we see the interaction as the first step to forming a sense of community (to share the sense of belonging to a certain physical or digital locale, to share information, to support, or to engage in a relationship), it is fair to say that at the time I examined them these two blogs were rather isolated from the networks, if they existed, of online Taiwanese parents/babies, and no online community was being formed or practised in them. In short, researchers have found that online interaction gives parents opportunities to meet people beyond geographic boundaries, and to obtain social and emotional support (Åsenhed et al., 2014; Holloway & Valentine, 2003; Livesay, 2011; Smolinski, 2016; Stamm et al., 2016; Thompson-Hayes, 2011; Veazey, 2016; Zhang, 2011); however, none of these features were evident in either Dylan's or Ruby's blog. This finding shows that different users used the same online service differently; it also reminds me that my assumption of 'the blog' before I entered the field was biased.

#### 4.2.2 On/Off-line Community

Compared with Dylan's and Ruby's blogs, although the outward links are also weak, there are many more interactions in Rosie's blog. The blog was started after Rosie was born and most of the early entries were about their daily life:

I am not good at expressing my love, so I try to take the most beautiful photographs of my girl. By recording our daily life in photographs, this blog is to let Rosie know how much daddy and mummy love her.

Here we can see that Rosie-pa has stated the same purpose as Daddy Tom: the blog is for the child to read in the future (I will discuss this later in this section), but this purpose was soon replaced by his new way of using the blog. When Rosie was six months old, Rosie-pa started to advertise in his blog and in another online parenting

forum for similar aged playmates for his daughter. This attracted two or three families in the first few meeting-ups, and the meeting-ups later developed into a form which the blogger called a playgroup. The meeting-ups were arranged by Rosie's family to take the children to visit various attractions or to organise activities such as birthday parties. By the time Rosie was three, this playgroup had attracted tens of families to participate, and had been reported by an online magazine. The entries after the playgroup was formed are mainly about their days out (with the exception of a few entries about their second daughter and the birth of their third) and Rosie-pa blogged with his readers in mind. In the interview with the online magazine (he posted it in his own blog), he said:

Having organised the meetings for two years, there have been ups and downs. I'm very grateful for the support of the families participating in it which has made it possible for more people to see what have we done for our children. [...] Loyal readers' continuous reading gives me the power to go ahead. I write every entry with all my heart. It is for the reader and myself to read happily. These records will be my priceless memory after they grow up.

Unlike Daddy Tom, who addressed his child - the main expected reader - as 'you', in most of Rosie-pa's later writings he assumed the role of a reporter, and his daughters were the characters in the story. He and his readers interacted a great deal online. The active readers of the blog, judging by their user names and the comments they left, were mothers of other participants in the playgroup. After the playgroup was formed and the members used the blog to interact, the blog developed from a baby blog into an interactive space for the group participants. They did not use the blog to organise the activities, for example, to arrange a meeting-up. Most of the playgroup-related interactions were events reported afterwards. However, regard to the community, one cannot really claim that their community was a (pure) online community. Although the blog was open to the public and the interactions between the members were warm and welcoming, this was not always the case when an outsider arrived. An example is a comment below the birth record of his third daughter. Below numerous messages of congratulations to the newborn and to the family, an outsider had left a message that said:

I feel the level of your sharing could be described as obsessed. Is it necessary to over-expose the detailed process of your wife giving birth to your girl? Your wife and children should have their own right of privacy. [...] I hope you can sit down [calm down] and think again: is it too much? [...] This is just my two cents, no offence.

It is rare for Rosie-ma to appear in the blog as an active subject, rather than just an object that has been recorded, to say something herself. However, this instance was an exception. Her reply, posted using Rosie-pa's account, said:

Everyone's way of expressing his love is different. [...] I know how much Rosie-pa values me and our children, but he does not know how to say it. Blogging using words and photographs is his way of expressing his love. It is maybe true that I do not like to be exposed too much, but I also feel Rosie-pa's suffering from considering my wishes. [...] We meet each other half way. [...] Thanks for your consideration, but since the wife accepts [it], an outsider like you should not have a say [about this]. Not to mention that you do not know anything about us, [...] you really are not qualified to comment here.

Having apparently been backed up by his wife, Rosie-pa then also replied in an impolite and defensive way, saying:

My friend, I do not think you know me. It is baffling to be criticised by you. I know my boundary and know what to blog and what not to. I do not need your supervision. [...] I welcome readers' comments and criticism only if they are correct, but I will not accept your baffling criticism. [...] Do we know each other? If not, how I blog is none of your farting business.

From the conversation, we can see that Rosie-pa and Rosie-ma drew a line regarding the qualification to criticise. Although Rosie-pa said "welcome, if they are correct", in the conversation, he did not defend or argue on the topic of the right to privacy of his wife and children. Instead of trying to prove himself to be in the right, even after Rosie-ma admitted that she did not like to be exposed too much, he simply said the comment was baffling. His personal boundary concerning the sharing was not discussed (although it had already been shown in the blog), the debate did not continue, and the door was shut. The fact that they both concluded their disagreement

by saying that because you do not know us off-line, you do not have the right, or are not qualified to have a say, shows that the online relationship with this reader was deeply influenced by their lack of an off-line relationship.

We can see that Rosie-pa's online doings were strongly linked to his off-line life. After the blog turned into an interactive space for the playgroup members, the active users did express a sense of belonging to a community: the playgroup. However, the community was not exactly an online community. Because Rosie-pa's aim was to meet other families off-line, the geographic issue played an important role in the practice: his target readers/participants were those who lived in the same area, where a meeting-up would be possible. In various comments, the participants more than once mentioned that they were the biggest/best playgroup in their city - bigger than those in other cities. After a big meeting-up involving more than 50 families, the blogger claimed that 'the best playgroup to be proud of in Taiwan is in our city'. We can see that the sense of community here was closer to an off-line one. The blogger's and the participants' sense of the locale of their community was in the city they lived in, rather than within the blog.

Although, as shown in the previous section, the other two blogs were quite isolated online, a similar sense of an off-line locale was also evident in these two blogs. For example, the information mentioned in Ruby and Dylan's blogs related to facilities that were physically reachable and practical for their readers. For instance, information was given regarding the following: Where is the bargain toyshop? At which hospital can you get a certain kind of support? Where is the best place to take a physical training course? Where can you find a child-friendly restaurant? When is a particular activity held in a particular place (such as story time in a library)? And in Dylan's case, although Dylan's father failed to attract readers to his blog to interact online, from later articles in Dylan's blog, it appeared that some parts of the blog were published off-line, and that he was invited to share his experience of being a father with an autistic child by various off-line community centres and high schools.

The above exploration of the connection between on and off-line lives provides some insight into the use of blogs. In the case of Dylan's father, although his attempt to create an online community apparently failed, his blog later gave him the opportunity

to participate in the off-line world with this new identity (a father blogger raising a child with autism). And in Rosie's case, the blog first played the role of advertising their desire to meet other (off-line) local parents. After the off-line community was formed, the blog then provided a platform for the members to interact. The community-like activities in the blog were thus not only an online community but also an extension of their off-line community. This finding appears to support Hine's (2015) argument: that the internet is now embedded and/or embodied in our everyday lives, and the boundary between on and off-line has become blurred (Hine, 2012, 2015a). From these examples, we can see that, in contrast to the early concern that the online environment would increase isolation and loneliness in the 'real (off-line)' community (Lockard, 1997), what happened in these blogs (and among their readers) shows the linkage between online and off-line communities. The online environment was used to exchange off-line information and brought new relationships to their off-line lives; off-line actions enriched the online representation of their parenting practices. On and off-line lives and communities are therefore not separate, but interwoven.

### **4.2.3 Confirming the Relationship with Family Members**

In the above discussion of the three fathers' different ways of using the blog and of the blurred boundary between on and off-line communities, another interesting point was mentioned: two of the fathers stated that one of the purposes of starting the blog was so that their child could read it in the future. In most of the literature on online motherhood, the expected readers of the blog (or even later tweets or Facebook updates) were the readers in current time. The sharing, supporting and other interactions were happening between them. If we assume that there is a boundary which defines the range of the family (although this would be different for different people), it is fair to say that the writings that, for example, seeking for social support outside the family are outward writings. In this instance, however, the statements of the fathers in the current research show the inward intention of their writings.

Among the three blogs, this intention is most obvious in Ruby's case. As mentioned earlier, Daddy Tom named the blog Ruby's online dowry and turned the public comment function off. Unlike the other two blogs, where the number of images of the fathers are limited, there are a great many photographs of him in this blog. They took family shots (with him in the frame) quite often. He dated, counted and marked their family shots. For example, one family shot taken on a certain date would be entitled: 'Ruby, this is our fifteenth family shot'.

Although he never admitted as much to the readers, and in the limited number of relevant entries he always demonstrated a positive attitude towards his health condition, I inferred that his writing style (talking to his daughter) and his strategy (trying to cover as many aspects as possible) were influenced by his illness and it was his way of using the blog to deal with his (possible in the near future) death. In recent years, scholars ( e.g., Gibbs, Meese, Arnold, & Nansen, 2015; Leaver, 2013, 2015) have started to pay attention to the concept of digital death. For example, as various digital services emerged in many people's daily lives, when someone passed away, dealing with his/her social media and email accounts could be problematic. There are various online services that provide different procedures to deal with this problem. Google, for example, encourages users to set up an Inactive Account Manager to let them know "who should have access to your [the user's] information, and whether you [the user] want your [his/her] account to be deleted" after his/her death (Google, n.d.). There are also (off-line) digital legacy services which help individuals to manage their various accounts/services passwords and pass the information to pre-set heirs (Leaver, 2013). Facebook, on the other hand, provides a service to turn the deceased person's account into a memorialised account where friends and family can remember, and mourn, the (ex-) account holder (Facebook, n.d.). The idea of using digital materials as a means to remember deceased loved ones can also be seen in the service of the digital tombstone (Karlin, 1999) and is described in research into the usage of image sharing sites (Gibbs et al., 2015). In Daddy Tom's case, I surmised that he may have been worried that he might not have the chance to tell the stories to the grown-up Ruby in person, and this concern continuously fuelled his writing. Although his doing cannot be seen as writing a



digital will, this blog serves the function of providing a means for Ruby to remember him as a father.

However, if the purpose of creating the blog was only so that the child could read it in the future, why would they publish it online and even enter the blog in open blog competitions? To understand this, the concept of ‘displaying family’ proposed by Finch could be useful. In 2007, Janet Finch introduced the concept of ‘display’ into the field of research on families. Following the argument that contemporary families, owing to their diversity and fluidity, are defined more by ‘doing’ family things than by ‘being’ a family (Morgan, 1996), Finch argued that “families need to be ‘displayed’ as well as ‘done’” (Finch, 2007, p. 66). In her view, display is the process by which individuals, and groups of individuals:

...convey to each other and to relevant audiences that certain of their actions do constitute ‘doing family things’ and thereby confirm that these relationships are ‘family’ relationships (Finch, 2007, p. 67).

If we apply this concept to the current research, when the father bloggers blogged, they used the internet to display selected aspects of their family life in public in order to confirm their family relationships. This confirmation was not only for their readers, but also for the child in the future: to know about their early days, to remember, and to confirm their relationship: as Rosie-pa said, “this blog is to let Rosie know how much daddy and mummy love her”.

In this process of displaying (blogging), the photograph played an important role: Rosie-pa said he was recording their daily life by photographs and liked to take the most beautiful photographs of Rosie; Daddy Tom might have been worried about his future absence and featured himself in numbered and dated family photos. The usage of a large number of photographs is a prevalent characteristic of Rosie-pa and Daddy Tom’s blogs. In their blogs, photographs are featured in almost every entry. Subject-wise, Daddy Tom’s photographs were mainly family photographs, while Rosie-pa’s photographs, especially after the playgroup was formed, featured many other participants and venues. In addition to this, they both took pictures of the things (for example, clothes, bottles, toys, books) they bought for the child. Similarly, they did

not use graphics and photographs in a “snap” manner but in an arranged manner: the backgrounds were seldom messy, the lighting conditions were good, and the subjects in the frame usually dressed specially, posed and looked straight at the camera. Further, they both revealed their interest in or enthusiasm for photography and their concern about the ‘quality’ of the photos. Both fathers mentioned their cameras and lenses in different entries. In order to take “beautiful photographs of the child”, they upgraded their photo-taking equipment (cameras and lenses). Of the two, Rosie-pa showed the most interest in the quality of photographs: he was the one who took photographs not only for Ruby but also for other members of the playgroup he organised; he mentioned that he would edit the photos to make them perfect before he put them online; he even set up a mini studio in the house and advertised in his blog banner that he was available (for a fee) to take “baby photographs for you”. In an entry about taking Rosie’s passport photograph at home, he showed 12 different shots of Rosie he took that day, and shared with his readers how he set up the equipment (see Figure 1 below), edited and printed the photographs. This valuing of the quality of their family photographs confirms recent findings regarding online family photographs.



*Figure 1: Rosie-pa’s set-up for taking Rosie’s passport photograph at home*

Recent discussion on online family photographs has revealed a trend of valuing the quality of the photograph and the social function of the family photograph. Since personal cameras became ubiquitous, some people have taken up photography as “an amateur hobby, in which artistic ambitions play an important part” (L. Wang, Alasuutari & Aro, 2014 P.193-194). In this development, family photos not only preserve memories, but are also used as a means of socialising with people who share the same interests and hobbies (Pauwels, 2008), and the existence of online photograph sharing/socialising websites such as Flickr and Instagram make it even more convenient to do this. Wang and colleagues (2014) examined birthday photographs shared on Flickr and found that the aesthetic frame becomes more prominent in the online context. They argued that the sharing of family photos online combines the intention and function of socialising and self-expression. They found that, although it is to be expected to see greetings in comments under a birthday photo, in the online context, there were also skill discussions; for instance, comments such as: the hand is blurred, the frame is dull, the exposure is off, references to the choice of black and white or colour, and so on. Further, they also found that the birthday photos they analysed were not there simply to record the event (for example, a child standing in front of his/her birthday cake). There were a certain number of posed and arranged ‘birthday photos’ (for example, a boy holding a card which states his age in a studio-like setting) and they argued that this form of photograph serves the purpose of fulfilling aesthetic requirements or demonstrating that the taker is a good photographer. In this research, as mentioned earlier, it was found that Rosie-pa and Daddy Tom both valued the quality of their photographs. However, the social function here was different from the discussions on the quality of the photographs. I found that their valuing of the quality of their photographs did not attract other (parent) photographers to discuss skill with them in their blogs. In summary, if we put the nature of photo taking and the concept of displaying family together, it appears that the (family) photograph serves the important function of proving the father’s presence.

In a similar way to researchers who use visual data to prove that ‘I was there’ and to reinforce the authenticity of the data and findings (Davis, 1992), in this research blogging (especially the photographs taken by the father) confirmed (or revealed) the

father's presence. Among the different kinds of blog entry, there was one type which consisted of the fathers reviewing events. In this kind of entry, they recorded detailed reviews of the events, including the selection of venue, traffic, the pros and cons of certain kinds of meeting-up, whether the children were friendly or not, decorations, the programmes, food arrangements, cost and so on. In most cases, they used a lot of high-resolution photographs of the venue, the equipment used in the events, the presents and the participants, including other children, to report or to review certain events. These detailed reviews could be seen as proof of their presence.

Unlike Rosie-pa and Daddy Tom, Dylan's father did not use very many photographs in the blog. There were photographs of Dylan, one in each of the entries of his first-year diary (those that were originally written off-line and later typed online). However, in later entries, he seldom posted Dylan's picture. One of the reasons he gave is that he did not want Dylan to be identified as a child with special needs in (off-line) public. The other reason was revealed in one of the rare instances which featured photographs of Dylan, where Dylan's father wrote:

He is so cute, isn't he? But can you tell that he has the face of an angel but has mood disorders like the devil? All you can see is the face of an angel, but only we [family members] know his mood disorders of the devil.

This paragraph shows that he did not think the form of a photograph could reflect the 'realities' of his child. The aim of this featured picture was not to show Dylan, nor the father's own ability as a photographer, but to express his point of view that photographs cannot reflect the 'real' Dylan. For the purpose of recording and displaying his family, he found the form of the photograph does not serve well and could even be misleading, so he mainly used words to describe Dylan's life and symptoms. Although they took a different form, however, Dylan's father's detailed descriptions also served the function of proving his presence. In Taiwan, the father's presence is a rare feature. A nationwide survey on the image of the Taiwanese father showed that more than 50% fathers did not have dinner with the family every day, and 34% fathers usually arrived home after their child had gone to bed (The Child Welfare League Foundation, 2013). In other words, it is 'normal' for Taiwanese fathers to be absent physically from the family household. Considering this

background, when the fathers showed their presence, they were also showing that they spent more time with their children than many other fathers.

Among the various records which expressed or implied the importance of presence, one scene stood out: giving birth to the child. For example, Rosie-pa says this in the record of the birth of their second child:

Fathers, don't you leave the room or the hospital only because you're bored. It must be said that we are not the one who suffers the pain. All we can do is be there to give a little bit of support. Although the process can be as long as 12 hours or even longer, we have to adhere to it. Don't be impatient or angry when the child is not coming; our support is also an important part of getting it (giving birth) done.

In this paragraph, Rosie-pa highlights the importance of a father's presence and support. A similar value attached to the father's presence at the birth also appeared in Ruby's blog. When Daddy Tom was told that he could not attend the operation after he had accompanied Mummy Jane in her hours of trying but being unable to give birth naturally, he described his feelings as having received 'a bolt from the blue'. He reported pleading with the doctor and explaining that he had experience of attending a sterile room and earned himself the opportunity to enter the room. He recorded:

Mummy Jane told me afterward that it was a relief to see me there. It helped her to settle down. We held each other's hand until the time the baby was born.

Again, Daddy Tom presented a version of a caring and supporting husband whose presence was enough to give Mummy Jane some relief in a stressful or even upsetting situation.

In their entries about the births of their children, detailed records were featured. In Ruby's case, the record featured tens of photographs from every related device in the hospital, to the tired mother, and to the blood-covered newborn baby. The process was recorded in detail down to minutes: for example, a picture of the monitor device was captioned: '17:20, the nurse checked the baby's heartbeats for the second time and measured the blood pressure of the mother'. After the baby was born, personal information such as birth time, sex, height and weight were all recorded in words.

Although the record was not as detailed in the sense of time, Rosie-pa also took photographs of various pieces of equipment in the hospital, and of every stage in the process of his wife giving birth to their three girls, including devices in the hospital, the hard-working wife, the blood-covered new-born baby, and their personal information. If we compare the three birth records Rosie-pa produced, the first one (of Rosie) was the simplest and the third was the most detailed. We could say that his skill of keeping his wife company (for example, getting to know more about the progress of his wife's body, understanding more about the process of giving birth in the hospital) and taking photographs developed over the three years. We could also say that, seeing blogging as a part of his fathering, his method of blogging also changed during that time. Seeing fathering as a process of learning to be a father, in the aspect of blogging, he learned to post more photographs and more detailed records online. And, as we also saw in the previous section, this way of blogging was supported by Rosie-ma in replying to the critical reader: 'this is his way of expressing his love'.

This was the second time she had her say in the blog. The other instance was when they were interviewed by an online magazine; she talked about her view of the blog and her words were quoted by the reporter:

In the beginning, Rosie-ma could not understand [Rosie-pa's blogging]. She thought being with the child was more important and real than taking photographs. However, after she saw her child through Rosie-pa's photographs, she realised that the cameraman provided a different angle and a different type of moving [emotionally moved]. When she later reviewed Rosie's growth, she appreciated Rosie-pa's support.

Rosie-ma's reply again showed her compliance: she thought it was more important to play with the child than to take photographs, but she gave in. At the same time, it gives us a good example of how displaying can confirm family relationships.

In this section, I have introduced the three fathers' different ways of using the blog and the social meanings of blogging. In short, they took advantage of the technology to organise their multi-media fathering records. By revealing their family lives online

in public, the fathers made it possible for the family relationships to be confirmed by the readers as well as by their family members, including their children in the future. In addition, their doings (their blogging and the off-line activities they reveal in the blogs) show how on/off-line lives and communities are not two separate things, but are interwoven in various ways. The internet provided them with the opportunity to cross their original social relationship boundaries and meet other off-line sources, and again, the new off-line relationship enriched the online space.

As I explained in Chapter 2, the public image of the good father is still undergoing a process of change. While the version of the “new” good father who shares the housework, including childcare, is widespread (Chao, 2011b; Hsu, 2005; Mo, 1997), a traditional kind of ‘old’ good father is also still highly, and officially, valued. This old good father is the authority figure and the head of the family; he brings up ‘successful’ children; he works hard at paid jobs and is the breadwinner of the family (Chao, 2011b). Seeing blogging as a doing of their fathering, we can see that these fathers showed that they participated in these child-related scenes and at least took on the job of recording. This suggests that they were, at least partly, hands-on fathers. In the next section, I take a further step in discussing the fatherhood that has been displayed by these fathers, especially regarding the child-related divisions of labour, by analysing the content of the blogs.

### 4.3 The Digital Representation of Fatherhood

As discussed in Chapter 2, the online identity nowadays, the self, is no less real than the off-line identity; it is networked and even searchable (Baym, 2007; boyd, 2010; Helmond, 2010). The three fathers in this research fitted in with such developments. All three blogs used the real name or nickname of the child to name the blog, and the blogs were all linked to their (or even the child’s) Facebook pages, where users are asked to use their real names to register. Their shown identities were, as argued by scholars, networked and are constantly being updated. In the three blogs referred to here, there were traces of performance. For example, in Rosie’s and Ruby’s blogs,

there was no naughty child, no messy room, nor stressed parents; even a crying baby was a rare feature. Most of the information revealed was positive. Not only do the method of posting and the articles that are posted show evidence of performance, the content of the pictures also reveals a deliberate arrangement of what is to be shown in public. This also echoes the suggestion that the online identity is managed with the awareness of social surveillance (Albrechtslund, 2008; Marwick, 2012; Trottier, 2012; Westlake, 2008). In this case, the fathers were trying to represent the image of a good, or at least a proper, father who fits in with the social expectation of a good father. In this section, I illustrate the digital presentations of fatherhood in the three blogs, and discuss how they fit in with the new and old good father found in other Taiwanese fatherhood research.

In addition, as I have discussed in Chapter 2 that researchers (Arnold, 2011, 2016; Craig, 2016; Goriss-Hunter, 2016; Loe, Cumpstone & Miller, 2016; Orton-Johnson, 2016; Valtchanov, Parry & Glover, 2016) have found that mothers also face the pressure of being a good mother in the online environment, and this 'good mother' is still close to the ideology of intensive mothering described by Hays (1996). Following this thread, this section also discusses this digital representation of fatherhood with regard to the concept of intensive parenting.

### **4.3.1 The Divisions of Labour in the Household**

As shown in a previous section, father bloggers have to some extent entered the traditional mother-only territory of childcare (recording their children and participating in the scene), and thus the fatherhood seems closer to the new version of the good father. If we see fatherhood as a series of negotiations with motherhood in the household and in between their paid jobs and the role of a father (Gatrell, 2007; Marsiglio, 1991; Sanchez & Thomson, 1997; Vuori, 2009; Wall & Arnold, 2007; S. Williams, 2008), apart from blogging, how and to what extent were they involved in the process of childcare? Following these questions, I first focus on the content of their blogs which is related to the divisions of labour in the household.



In Rosie-pa's case, he provided limited information about his daily life; however, through his interactions with his readers, he revealed that his wife had a full-time job and, on most days, the main carers of his daughters were their grandmothers. Among the limited number of records of their daily life, some of the recorded (as he describes them) 'precious father-daughter times' are: taking Rosie for a walk, going shopping together, trying on new clothes, and playing with new toys. The situation is similar in Ruby's case. Ruby's diaries show that Daddy Tom and Mummy Jane both had a full-time job. During Mummy Jane's maternity leave (around two months in her case) the main carer was Mummy Jane. In this period, Daddy Tom shared certain aspects of the housework, and parts of childcare, for example, putting Ruby to sleep or changing her nappy. After Jane went back to work, the main carer during the day was the child's grandmother. When Ruby was one year, two months and twenty-nine days old, Tom posted an entry entitled: One Day Mothering Father. In the entry he writes:

Because of a traffic accident on the highway, daddy Tom's grandmother, i.e., Ruby's great grandmother, is in the hospital. [...] Your grandmother stays in the hospital to look after her mother, so mummy took a day off yesterday to look after Ruby. Today is daddy's turn. This is the very first time Ruby has spent the whole day, from waking up to going to bed, with daddy alone.

This reveals that although Tom shared and joined in a certain part of childcare, he seldom had to deal with the child alone. As Tom recorded, he handled the day all right. This to some extent confirms the finding that fathers are capable of doing work that is traditionally the province of the mother (Coltrane, 1989), but after this (positive) experience, he did not blog about taking on any more childcare.

This kind of division of labour was not only shown within the home, but also in cases of going out. For example, in the entry about Rosie's second birthday, among the tens of photographs, there were two photographs of Rosie who was not smiling, but even looked a bit grumpy, alone, in the frame. In the caption he wrote:

I am sorry Rosie, daddy is busy taking photographs of the venue and mummy is busy arranging your party, so you have to play on your own.

He mentioned a similar arrangement in different meeting-up entries. One of them said:

After we had more and more participants, Rosie-pa got even busier taking every angel's [the participants' children] smiling face. In this case, Rosie-ma had to play multiple roles: the childminder, the guide, and also the commander in control of the meeting.

From these extracts, we can see that the way the work was shared on an ordinary day out was as follows: Rosie-ma (and other participant mothers) took care of the venue, the decorating and childcare, while Rosie-pa's job was to take photographs (and put the record online later) of the whole event. Although the contents showed that the fathers were not the main carers on site and the mothers were very busy, I found that they never asked: since you are there, why don't you put down your camera and roll up your sleeves? Rather, under various records, especially those featuring a lot of pictures, mother readers stated that they were deeply moved to see such detailed records and such a good father who was at the scene to support the mother, and all the beautiful pictures of their children. There were many that praised them for being a good father; one of the comments in Rosie's blog reads: "Rosie's so lucky. Having you to record for her. It is like having two mummies". This more or less shows that, in that reader (a mother) thought the parts Rosie-pa was involved in (photo taking and blogging) were also the mother's job. In a previous section it was mentioned that over time Rosie-pa blogged more and more photographs and shared more and more details. It was also shown that this decision, although critiqued by one reader, was supported by his wife. On this point, there was a consensus in the household. However, the messages of praise from the public quoted above reveal that this was also a public agreement. In other words, the doing (blogging) and the praise that followed it combined to construct a version of a good father (as good as a mother): a father who blogs with beautiful photographs and detailed records of the child. However, from the contents, the divisions of labour seemed to stop at blogging and did not extended to other child-caring work.

However, this outcome should not be understood as a simple lack of ideas about gender equality; there is a broader context that constrains parental choices, which is

that of employment. Researchers have suggested that, should legal responsibilities change, this could change the daily practices of gender roles (Gregory & Milner, 2005; Hearn & Pringle, 2006; Vuori, 2009). In Taiwan, the legal system towards parents still has room for improvement. For example, there is only eight weeks of legal maternity leave for mothers and only five days of paternity leave for fathers. A recent research study (Center for Educational Research and Evaluation & Department of Human Development and Family Studies, 2017) showed that in families with a child of three years old, 98% of the fathers were working fathers and 70% of the mothers were working mothers. In this situation, more than 58% children in Taiwan were not being taken care of by their parents. Among them, more than 70% had started to be taken care of by non-parents before they were one year old. The above-mentioned image of fathers' absence from home is also rooted in the long working hours. A survey conducted in 2015 by three unions in Taiwan (the Taiwan Higher Education Union, Solidarity, and the Trade Union of Electrical, Electronic and Information in Taiwan) revealed that more than 50% of Taiwanese employees work more than 45 hours every week, including 8% who work more than 60 hours. Even when the fathers are willing to participate more, therefore, the opportunities are restricted.

To summarise, we can see that if there was a choice (other women to turn to), the daily divisions of labour still followed the 'traditional' way, in which childcare is the responsibility of women. This division of labour was also accepted by the mothers (Rosie-ma and other participant mothers) in the blog discussed here. This confirms Gregory and Milner's (2005) finding: fathers' involvement was limited to light work: for instance, playing with the child, and he played the second (supporting) role. Research from twenty years ago (Mo, 1997; S. Wang & Yu, 1997) indicated that Taiwanese fathers were involved with their children in less demanding work at weekends and during holidays, but that most of the daily routines were left to their wives. More recent research on Taiwanese fatherhood also found that the sharing of responsibility for childcare was still seen as an extra for fathers. Although young fathers did show their willingness to be the 'new' good father, the practice was still limited (Hsu, 2005; Juang, 2007). Even in a dual-earning household, responsibility for housework and childcare was still mainly on the mother's shoulders (Juang,

2007). The division of labour in the household revealed in this research did not seem to be very different.

### 4.3.2 Intensive Fathering?

Similar to the findings of research into online motherhood, there were also examples of intensive parenting in these three blogs, starting with the title of the blogs.

Although the authors of these blogs are the fathers, they all called the blog by the child's name or nickname. Although they were the authors, Rosie-pa, Rosie-ma and Dylan's father all participated in their own blogs using the identity of 'the child's parent'. In other words, they all put the child at the centre when they started and run their blogs. This doing reflects the ideology of intensive mothering described by Hays (1996):

[T]he willingness to expend a great deal of physical, emotional, cognitive, and financial resources on the child – follows directly from the requirement of placing the child at the center of one's life and putting the child's needs above one's own (p. 128).

In the content, there were also entries about the days out they arranged for the child, and various things (clothes, toys and books) they bought for the child, which both suggest their willingness to spend their time and financial resources on the child.

Among the various themes in the content, the child's developmental record provided strong evidence of intensive parenting. These father bloggers tended to use medical terms to record and describe their children's development. For example, Daddy Tom featured development charts and other recording sheets, such as a teething sheet, in the diary. Also, he used terms featured in the developmental inventory such as gross motor, fine motor, conceptual comprehension, situation comprehension, expressive language and so on, to describe and to survey Ruby's development. While Daddy Tom blended the developmental record into the rest of the diary, after Dylan was diagnosed with autism, Dylan's father divided the record into different topics and

tried to describe Dylan's condition (symptoms) in a medical/ professional way. For example, he used the term 'mood disorder' instead of 'bad tempered', and 'expression barriers' instead of 'can't speak'. The diary included his judgments and reasoning, his dealing with, and his interactions with Dylan, as if he was writing a medical case record of Dylan.

This kind of professional-like developmental record reflects two sides of one phenomenon. In the aspect of childhood, which I discuss in more detail in the next chapter, this frame sets up a kind of standard and at the same time defines what is normal and what is abnormal. In the aspect of fatherhood, it shows similarities with the findings on intensive motherhood. Apart from child-centred family life and the willingness to expend resources on the child, scholars (Apple, 1995; Cunningham, 2005; Hays, 1996; Widding, 2015) have argued that motherhood is partly constructed and guided by the advice and knowledge they have obtained from experts, and this knowledge (of parenting and/or child development) could turn into an accepted standard (of good or bad mothers) and become a source of pressure on mothers. By using this professional-like method of recording and demonstrating their children's development, these fathers were telling their audiences that they put their children in the centre, and that they care enough to learn the related knowledge and the details of their children's development.

Acknowledging the changes in the father's role, scholars (Palladino, 2014; Smyth & Craig, 2017) have coined the terms intensive fathering and intensive parenting to discuss this situation, that many fathers may face. Although these records might suggest that the fathers in this research were facing a similar pressure (to be a good parent, to raise the child properly) to the pressure mothers are under, however, given the fact (in Rosie and Ruby's cases) that they were not, and were not expected to be, the main carers of the child and acted only as helpers in the scene, this cannot have been the case. As shown previously, the (off-line) divisions of labour revealed in these two blogs were still close to the traditional way; if the child was not raised properly, the responsibility would be that of the main carer (the mother or the grandmother), not that of the helper (the father).

In an entry in which Daddy Tom tried to express his gratitude to Mummy Jane (for trying very hard to keep Ruby purely breast-fed after she went back to work), he wrote:

Because Daddy Tom has been weak [cancer], from the very beginning of the pregnancy, I keep hoping Ruby can be pure breast fed so that she can gain the nutrition and better immunity.

As breast milk is recommended (by medical research and in many cases the health policy) as the best source of nutrition for infants, to breast feed (or not) turned into a moral standard used to judge what is a good mother (Jansson, 2009; Knaak, 2010; E. J. Lee, 2008). In the case referred to here, we can see that this decision was influenced by a medical rationale: pure breast feeding gives a child better immunity. We are also told that Mummy Jane put a lot of effort into this task and put the child's needs above her own. This echoes research findings on breast feeding and intensive mothering. To keep providing mother's milk is a task which can only be accomplished by Mummy Jane, but, in the extract, Daddy Tom mentioned the hope as his hope, rather than theirs. This to an extent shows that Daddy Tom could have the power to direct the method of child rearing even though he was not the one who would have to put it into practice. If this is the case, those "professional-like" terms and knowledge may be guiding these fathers' understanding of the child and decisions on methods of child rearing, but they will not be experiencing as much pressure to be a good parent since they are not the main carer.

As mentioned above, the main carers of both Ruby and Rosie included their grandmothers. This raised another question: was there any sign of intensive grand-mothering? In her discussion on the child-caring situation and related policy in Post-communist Poland, where mothers were encouraged to find a paid job and child-rearing responsibility was often in grandmothers' hands, Włodarczyk used the term intensive grand-mothering to discuss the difference in the expectations and ways of child rearing between the modern mothers and the old-fashioned grandmothers (Włodarczyk, 2014). However, I could not find any record of that kind of conflict between the generations in the two families in this research. Rather, the fathers both show their gratitude for their mothers' (and/or mother-in-laws') help. The reason for

this is rooted in the concept of filial obedience, which I discuss in more detail in Chapter 6. Under this cultural code of filial obedience, it would be difficult for them to disagree with their parents openly even when there were conflicts in their off-line interactions: they might be identified as being unfilial. Also, the grandmothers (although they were the main carers on weekdays) were also described as helpers. This shows that the mother was still the default responsibility taker.

The intensive parenting that appears in Ruby's and Rosie's blogs – although described by the father -- is therefore still closer to intensive mothering, not intensive fathering. In this sense, their records may be described more as supervision notes: monitoring or supervising to ensure that the child was brought up properly, and they reinforced the concept of intensive mothering in public discourse (their blogs) and the practice in their households. In the next section, I discuss the case of Dylan's father who took on the job of the main carer of the child.

### **4.3.3 I am *not* a Child Carer, but a Multi-professional**

In the examples given in the previous section, the two fathers showed no tension in assuming the (limited) roles of 'new' good father. However, there was a difference in the case of Dylan's father. Before Dylan was diagnosed, the main carer of Dylan was the mother. The diaries in this period mainly focused on the time the father spent with Dylan, and were, in his words, a record of nurturing: how we listened to the English learning CD together, how he learned to make tea with me, and so on. Although they lived in the same house as the father's parents (on a different floor), the grandparents did not assist with childcare. Instead, according to Dylan's father's writing, they quite often, especially when Dylan cried out loud, criticised the mother's poor child caring skills, and this made the relationship between the mother and the paternal grandparents quite strained. It shows that the mother was expected to take full responsibility for childcare and that what she did was being observed by the older generation.

After Dylan was diagnosed with autism, the father expressed his shock and desperation. He gave up the idea of ‘nurturing’ his child, changed the verb regarding Dylan to ‘train’, and later decided to leave his job to ‘train’ Dylan himself. He described how hard it was for him to take on the job of the main carer.

In his description, two principal reasons were given: on the one hand, he felt that the tension between his parents and his wife would increase if he left the situation as it was; on the other hand, their income was not high enough for them to accept the offer, made by the head teacher, of hiring a professional assistant for Dylan in the nursery. The social welfare system in Taiwan did not cover this kind of need. If they wanted this extra service, it would be at their own expense. When considering leaving his job and looking after Dylan himself, Dylan’s father recalled:

During the struggle, I thought about this every night: traditionally, men should go out and earn a living while women should take care of the house. If I quit my job and train Dylan myself, can I stand neighbours’ gossip that says I am a man who eats soft rice [a phrase used to describe a man who stays at home and depends on a woman’s income]?

[...] Is it wise to gamble my own future for a child without a visible future? What if I failed?

Morgan (1996, 2004) argued that although housework (including childcare) and labour divisions are genderless, social expectation can give them gender; family life can face the tensions of, and be, ‘an element in the challenging of the wider gender order’ (Morgan, 1996, p. 79). By analysing an online forum for Stay-at-home Fathers (SAHF), Livesay also found that those SAHFs were wrestling with the traditional expectations for men to be the breadwinners, and the pressure (of social norms) because they did not do ‘manly chores’ but ‘womanly chores (child caring)’ (Livesay, 2011). From the above extract, we can see that Dylan’s father was not exactly saying that ‘I believe’ in this or that; instead, he mentioned the possible social pressure: traditional men’s roles and neighbours’ gossip. A later photograph caption could tell us more about the sort of norm he believed in. As the caption to a photograph in which he was wearing an apron and was in a nursery-like environment, painting with Dylan (who was not looking at the camera), he wrote:



A man wearing an apron? Laughable, outrageous and unsightly. Life is full of inevitable first-timers. Will slowly get used to it later.

He did not explain when or why he participated in that scene, but we could see that his default image of a man did not allow for this kind of thing (wearing an apron, participating in childcare). When a man had his hands on the child caring, it was not expressed proudly (as Rosie-pa and Daddy Tom did) as a mother's good helper. It was laughable, outrageous and unsightly. He did not like it, but could only try and get used to this (shameful) character.

In the end, he left his job and took on the role of the main carer of Dylan. He wrote that he 'does not have the good fortune to be a normal father', and described his new role as:

I cannot only be a father. I need to have the functions of doctor, speech therapist, occupational therapist and special education teacher. Furthermore, I need to play the role of music teacher, swimming coach, skating coach, gymnastics coach etc.

From his description, we cannot see him as challenging the gender code. In contrast, he justified his decision by seeing Dylan (and the situation) as a special case, and seeing his new role not as that of a child-minder/carer, but as a multi-professional. He saw himself, as the man of the house, as being the only suitable candidate for this mission. In other words, even though he experienced the social pressure, wrestled with the gender codes and finally assumed the role of the main carer, in the end he justified his decision in an unchallenging way: 'I have assumed the role not because I think/believe fathers can or cannot do it (be the main carer), but only because our case is special. In this special case, what we need is not only a child carer (as if being a child carer is easier in normal cases), but a multi-professional. Being the man of the household, I need to be the strong and assiduous one who can take on this most difficult task'. This image in effect serves to reinforce the image of the 'old' good father mentioned by Chao (2011).

Dylan's father's case provides an interesting example of fatherhood in the process of changing. If we put the previously mentioned old good father at one end of the spectrum and the new good father (who also works but shares more responsibility) at the other, we may describe Dylan's father as beginning his fatherhood journey from the old good father's end, and ending up passing the new good father's end: he took on the role of the main carer. Taiwanese fatherhood research has suggested that fatherhood is a process of learning, which is influenced by the personal experience and public image of either a new or an old good father and his daily interactions. Through practice, new fathers learn how to be good fathers (Hwu, 2000; Mau & Huang, 2010; Tu, 1999). In the journey from an old good father to a new good father, Dylan's father showed clear evidence of anxiety and struggle, as research has suggested. However, from his reasoning, we can see that the driving force behind the change was not a new idea of a good father, but the family's economic situation and the old version of a good father that emphasises the strength of men. As a result, Dylan's father provided a public image of a new good father who takes on the role of child-carer, but at the same time, because he described his role as that of a multi-professional, as if normal childcare is less, or not at all, skilful, his story strengthens the image of an old good father.

To summarise this section, the finding of this research is that although online fatherhood represents a version of fatherhood (presence and blogging) which is closer to the new side of fatherhood, in the aspect of the divisions of labour surrounding childcare, the revealed daily practices were still closer to the kind of fatherhood that has been studied off-line: in a 'common' situation, fathers are not the main carers of the child. The boring daily routines are the mothers' responsibility, and the pressure to raise the child properly is more on the mothers' shoulders. Even when fathers are involved in certain parts of the work, those are usually the less demanding aspects (Gregory & Milner, 2005; Mo, 1997; S. Wang & Yu, 1997). There were clear signs of intensive parenting. However, these fathers' writings reinforced the ideology of intensive mothering, not intensive fathering. Although Dylan's father actually took on the role of main carer, his reasoning process showed that the driving force behind the change was not a new idea of a good father, but the old idea. Only when the 'mission' is not seen as a daily routine but as a form of

professionalism for which higher level skills/knowledge are needed, is it appropriate for a father to take on the job of caring for the child.

## 4.4 Conclusion

Seeing blogging as a part of doing fatherhood, in this chapter, I have shown how three Taiwanese fathers have used the interface of the blog to record, to publish and to interact with their readers online. The findings suggest some new issues that have not been fully discussed in the previous literature.

With regard to online interactions and online community, the cases in this research provided further understanding to the on/off-line environment. The online and off-line communities showed in this research are not two separate things, but are interwoven in various ways and contribute to each other. With regard to the social function of these father-run baby blogs, I find that the baby blog served the purpose of confirming the relationships among family members, including the child in the future.

The examination of blogging and the off-line lives as revealed by these doings revealed that although the blogs provided some signs of a 'new' good father, the divisions of labour in the household, especially those related to childcare, were still close to the traditional view of what constitutes a good father. Childcare was still thought to be, and was in practice, as they demonstrated, the duty of the female members of the family. Dylan's father's case, on the other hand, provided an interesting example of the changing nature of fatherhood: although he presented a public image of a new good father who takes on the role of the main carer of the child, at the same time, as described above, his story strengthened the image of an 'old' good father. In the end, a good online father did not change the traditional image of the father, nor did he lighten the burden on the mother's shoulders. Furthermore, a good online father can easily become a new form of public monitor,

which confirms and strengthens the old norm, and reinforces the ideology of intensive mothering.

In the next two chapters, I examine the content of these blogs that related to their fathering (and mothering) and discuss the types of early childhood that have been represented by these father bloggers.



## Chapter 5 Rearing a Normal Child

### 5.1 Introduction

Having discussed fatherhood in Chapter 4, in the following two chapters I provide an answer to my research questions: what concepts of Taiwanese childhood are shown in these baby blogs? How are these concepts expressed? What factors are shown to be influential in constructing the expressed childhoods? As I pointed out earlier, childhood in this research is childhood as represented by the fathers. This representation includes their descriptions of the child, the photographs they displayed, and also the way childhood is reflected in the fathers' various approaches to raising their children. This phenomenon of sharing a child's information online has already been examined by Leaver (2015). When discussing the sharing of the first ultrasound photograph of an unborn child online, Leaver uses the term "intimate surveillance" to help us understand this relationship between the sharing parents and the young people who have little or no agency to resist. Although Leaver's main concern is the privacy and personal data of the child, he points out that "...[I]ntimate surveillance normalises a surveillance culture facilitated by our nearest and dearest, normalising the idea that parents will survey their kids in particular ways" (p.158). The blogging of the fathers who are the subject of this thesis fits in with Leaver's definition of intimate surveillance; however, there were other ways in which this kind of surveillance was constructed and normalised, as will be demonstrated in the following two chapters.

The various facets of childhood I found from an examination of the blogs, which were derived from the families' different approaches to raising a child, group together into two aspects. The first aspect is 'rearing a 'normal' child', which is the subject of this chapter; the second is 'nurturing a Taiwanese child', and this is discussed in Chapter 6. Before beginning the discussion regarding the rearing of a normal child, it is necessary to clarify the difference between these two aspects.

In the earlier stages of my analysis, a distinct image of the ‘normal’ child was identified. This view of the normal child was reflected in the amount of attention the fathers paid to their children’s height, weight and other developments, and the surveys they conducted. However, there were other means of child raising which were not directed by the same concept. It was also found that their approach to raising a child had more of a social purpose. For example, a girl’s height and weight were referred to the growing chart to check if she was growing properly. At the same time, one of the fathers was concerned about whether his daughter’s hair was too short for her to be recognised as being a girl. In the process of trying to distinguish between the two aspects of raising the child, I considered using the concept of socialisation to discuss the way in which the fathers’ approach to raising their children had more of a social purpose, but found it insufficient. For example, the fathers also showed their concerns of the child’s development referred to the developmental psychology, and those standards of the child’s social skill development were also considered as an element of a normal child. As the development of social skills has a long history in the field of socialisation (e.g., Parsons, 1956), it will bring further confusion to the discussion in Chapter 6. I considered dividing the two reflections of childhood into the themes of the biologically defined child and the socially or cultural defined child, but faced a similar contradiction; as shown later in this chapter, that the definition and standards of a normal child are also socially constructed.

In the end, I found the difference between the two approaches to raising the child in my mind is rooted in my cultural background. When talking about the act of raising a child, two co-verbs which both contain two Han characters, 養育(*yang-yu*) and 教養(*jiao-yang*), are usually used in Taiwan. The character 養(*yang*) appears in both co-verbs, and its meaning is close to grow, to feed, or to rear in English. It is also used to describe growing plants, or keeping a pet. The meaning of the character 育(*yu*) is close to nurturing or cultivating, and is also used to describe improved breeding. The meaning of the character 教(*jiao*) is to teach. And when *jiao* and *yu* are combined, the co-verb 教育(*jiao-yu*) is the generally accepted term for ‘education’ used by the Taiwanese government and people. We can see that both *yang-yu* and *jiao-yang*

include both the idea of feeding (keeping alive and healthy) and the aspect of nurturing or educating. In other words, the idea of raising a child in Taiwan includes at least these two aspects: feeding/rearing and nurturing/teaching. This way of understanding the act of raising a child is also revealed by Dylan's father. His story of leaving his job and taking on the role of the main carer of Dylan was mentioned in the previous chapter. When he was considering leaving his job, apart from the considerations listed in Chapter 4, he also mentioned that his parents (Dylan's grandparents) might be able to feed and look after Dylan, but it would be too much to ask them to teach an autistic child. Following this logic, in this study the fathers' concerns about their children's development are referred to as 'rearing', while the act of cultivating their children with certain social or cultural values is referred to as 'nurturing'. For example, when they surveyed their child to see if he or she was able to crawl by a certain age, it was identified as rearing; when they trained the child to crawl more quickly and took him or her to participate in a crawling competition, it was identified as nurturing. Although the two aspects of raising (*yang* and *yu*) are closely related and the boundary is not always clear, I found the above differentiation assisted me to understand and analyse my data.

In this chapter, I discuss the results of an analysis of the data from the three blogs used in this research, the focus of which was on the rearing of the children. By their displayed ways of rearing their children and their surveys of the children's development, the fathers constructed a public image of a normal child. The chapter consists of two main sections. In the first section, the fathers' accounts of what they considered to be a normal child and the social aspects that contributed to constructing this view of a child, including the Taiwanese legal system, the fathers' daily practices and commercial forces in Taiwan, are described. After discussing the institutionalisation of the concept of the normal child, in the second section I focus on Dylan's story, to illustrate how abnormality was understood, described and dealt with by Dylan's father. His efforts to try and normalise Dylan provide further evidence of the decisive power of the medical view of the normal child.

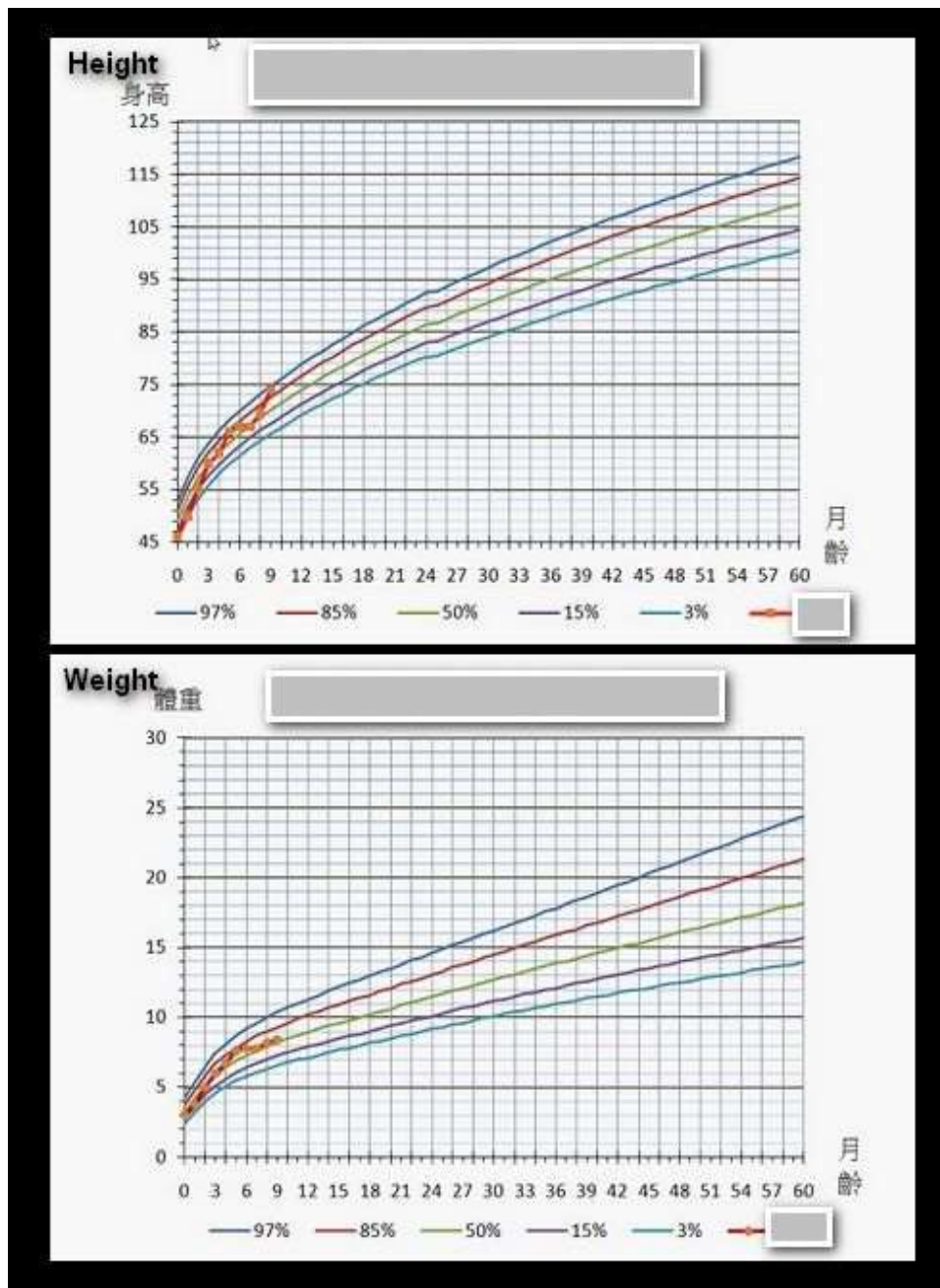


## 5.2 The Construction of a Normal Child

When discussing the concept of intensive parenting in Chapter 4, I mentioned that the fathers who are the subjects of this research tend to use medical terms to record and describe their children's development. This was identified as being a type of intensive parenting. In this section, I start by describing these activities, but focus on the other side of intensive parenting: how the image of a normal child was constructed by this kind of description and displaying.

### 5.2.1 Revealing and Meeting the Standards

Throughout the three blogs, the development of the child was an obvious shared topic. However, it was most evident in Ruby's blog. (I will introduce Rosie-pa's doings later and will discuss Dylan's case separately, as Dylan is identified by his father as being on the 'abnormal' side.) In the first year, Daddy Tom kept a diary every day. While the daily diaries included daily trivia, events and Ruby's physical changes (for example, which tooth she cut that day), he also gathered developmental records scattered in various diaries, arranged them under different subtitles and produced a monthly development report. He used charts for weight, height and teeth growth to record physical development, and described Ruby's other physical and psychological developments under different subtitles, such as gross motor, fine motor, conceptual comprehension, situation comprehension, expressive language and so on. Figure 2 on page 99 is a screen capture of the weight and height charts compiled when Ruby was 9 months old, and charts like these appeared in every monthly report.



*Figure 2: Height and weight charts from Ruby's site (9 months old)*

Using charts to record a child's development is not strange to today's parents, but the attitude of the fathers in these blogs towards medical standards was quite different from my personal experience here in the U.K. If we take the attitude towards the charts as an example, the section on "monitoring your child's growth" in my child's yellow book said the height of the baby will not be measured very often (once at

around the age of 2 and then not again before school entry), and the function of the growth charts was described for the parents' reference:

[growth charts] are used to check whether growth is proceeding normally. When the measurements are plotted they tell you how big your child is compared to most children. For example a child below the 2<sup>nd</sup> centile is in the smallest 2% of children. After the age of 6-12 weeks children usually track along roughly the same line and this reflects how naturally small or large they are. However all children show occasional drops or gains from that line. (p.10 in the May 2002 version; same contents on p.12 of the April 2006 version, Personal Child Health Record)

We can see that the charts are not seen as a standard to meet: the charts are there so the parents can see how their child is progressing; the percentage is there to indicate the size of the child, and occasional drops or gains are all possible and normal. However, the situation with practice in Taiwan as indicated in these blogs was not as tolerant. As shown in Figure 1, height and weight were measured at least monthly. And from Daddy Tom's record, the dots on the charts were not seen as simple indications of different sizes at different times, but as standards to meet. There was a time when Ruby was affected by enterovirus and her weight dropped, Daddy Tom's recording showed his attitude clearly. He recorded: 'Ruby's weight dropped by 0.8kg. After a month of striving, she gained back 0.9kg.' In this instance, Ruby was 1 year and 4 months old. The drop was caused by a known reason (affected by enterovirus), and even after losing 0.8kg, her weight was still higher than 50% on the chart. However, in the face of this, Daddy Tom not only showed obvious concern about the drop in weight but also used the word 'strive' to describe what they did (gave her more to eat) to make sure she regained the weight. It shows his anxiety that the child might fall below a certain standard. So where does this anxiety come from?

According to James and James (2004), ideas about children, practices involving children, and the legal system surrounding them are all elements which contribute to the construction of childhood. Thus, in order to explain Daddy Tom's anxiety, I first examined the Taiwanese child-related legal system and found that the concept of a 'delayed' child plays an important role.

### **5.2.2 The Legal System and the Concept of the ‘Delayed’ Child**

From Tseng’s (2008) study, it was not until 1992 that the concept of developmental delay was introduced in Taiwan, by a Non-Governmental Organisation (NGO) called the Parents’ Association for Persons with Intellectual Disability (PAPID): a delayed child is someone who develops more slowly than a ‘normal’ child according to physical (e.g., height, weight) and psychological (e.g., when he or she is able to do certain actions or has certain reactions) standards. PAPID argued that a delayed child should be positioned somewhere in between a normal and a disabled child. In their view, if a delayed child is treated early on, especially before the age of three, when many parts of the child are still growing and changing rapidly (they thus called the period from birth to three years old the golden period), he or she will have a better chance of developing normally in the future. Conversely, without proper treatment, he or she is more likely to become a disabled person in the future (Tseng, 2008).

The PAPID put forward a medical view of what constitutes a normal child and focused on how to prevent or reduce the chance of a child’s becoming disabled from a medical point of view. Many early leaders of PAPID had experience of living in the U.S. In their dialogue with the Taiwanese society of that time, they set traditional/local ideas in opposition to scientific/medical/Western (from the U.S.) ways of understanding children’s development. They argued that the traditional ways risked missing the opportunity to help delayed children, and they tried to import this newer way to combat the traditional ways of neglecting and explaining developmental delay (Chen, 2003). For example, there is a Taiwanese proverb that says ‘a bigger rooster crows later’, which is usually used to explain why a child still cannot speak after reaching a certain age. In PAPID’s view, this kind of explanation means delayed children often miss the opportunity to avoid future problems.

Their appeals were widely accepted by the two main political parties in Taiwan, and after the amendment of the Children’s Welfare Act (now the Protection of Children

and Youths Welfare and Rights Act) in 1993, developmentally delayed children became a new legal/social category. According to the Bye-laws of the Act, the definition of developmentally delayed children is:

(official English version article) children who's [sic] cognitive -; physical -; language - and communication development are below the normal average regarding psychosocial and mental development and skills, as evaluated and confirmed by psychometric testing and medical specialists appointed by the authorities before issuing them certificates. (Article 9, The Bye-laws of the Protection of Children and Youths Welfare and Rights Act)

In the article, we can see influences from PAPID: a medical understanding of what a normal child is. Since this idea was legitimised, screening for developmentally delayed children has become one of the most important administrative targets of the Health Promotion Administration (Huang, 2006). In practice, parents (carers) are thought to be the key people who should indicate and deal with the various signs of developmental delay (Wan, 1996). Every new parent will be given a child health handbook by the government, which includes a tremendous amount of advice on child rearing skills, development charts, information on developmental psychology, and various developmental screening tables (Health Promotion Administration, 2014). The amount and variety of information is complex enough to make the average parent feel confused, and there are books on the market, usually written by paediatricians, that teach you how to read this handbook (e.g., Tang, 2008). In the handbook, again we can see traces (or the same strategy) of the PAPID's view that the traditional understanding/explanation of the child is outdated and risky. On the page which contains information about the importance of early treatment, the handbook says:

(my translation) In the past, most parents had the concept of 'a bigger rooster crows later', and thought that their child would catch up later. However, now we believe a younger child's nervous system has more plasticity. Therefore, a developmentally delayed child should receive early treatment. The 'golden' time is before 3 years old when the intervention is more effective.

If you fail to give these delayed young children help, it may affect the development of their nervous system and intelligence later on. Therefore, early treatment [of this condition] is just like the treatment of [other] diseases: it is very important for your child's physical and mental health. (Health Promotion Administration, 2014, p. 97).

In order to judge whether the child is a delayed child who needs treatment, parents are required to follow the handbook's suggestion to survey their own child and co-operate with the medical institutions when necessary. The checking system is formed from two elements: time/ability or number. For example, certain month/knows how to crawl, certain month/how many centimetres tall, certain month/how many kilogrammes in weight and so on. According to Tseng's (2008) investigation, before a child enters primary school (in Taiwan this is at the age of seven), in addition to the checks done by the family, his or her physical and mental development will be screened at least 15 times by medical institutions and/or nursery schools.

After this medical/scientific way of understanding a young child was enforced by the government and put into practice by the medical institutions, nursery schools and parents, the concept of a delayed child was institutionalised, and differences (especially those indicating slower development) are now treated pathologically; at the same time, the concept of a 'normal' child was constructed: a child needs to reach a series of milestones in a specified time, and the standards are defined by medical institutions.

Tseng (2008) argued that this state-defined normal child and the practices that surround this idea are a kind of social developmental surveillance. This surveillance is made up of the (medical/scientific) understanding of the children's bodies, the material embodiments that represent this understanding (charts and screening tables), and the daily practices of the screening (p.169). Here it is appropriate to re-examine the "intimate surveillance" discussed by Leaver (2015). He argued that the practice of parents' sharing their children's personal information online normalised the idea that parents will survey their children in particular ways. However, if we put the legal responsibilities of the parents (especially the parts that relate to the delayed child) into the picture, it is evident that the sharing may not be the main force that

normalises the culture of child surveillance; it does, however, confirm and re-enforce this kind of surveillance. In short, this (displayed) way of rearing the child constructed a version of a normal child. With regard to the sharing of these records of this practice online, it not only normalised the sharing (blogging the child), but also confirmed this version of a normal child.

### **5.2.3 Not Only to Meet the State-set Standards**

From the fathers' blog doings described above, we can see that the state-enforced concept of what constitutes a normal child was accepted and practised by them: the child was shown as a collection of charts and medical/scientific descriptions, and the fathers put in a great deal of effort to monitor their child's development and to pursue the 'normal child' standards, as illustrated in 5.2.1. However, this research found that this pursuit did not stop when the child met the standards. The fathers showed an obvious sense of competition in their description of the child's development in two ways: they wanted their child to surpass the standards, and they wanted him or her to develop more quickly than other children. After seeing the legal description of the delayed child, we can understand why the fathers might have been anxious about their child falling below the standards: their concern is linked to the possibility of future disabilities. While falling behind was something to worry about, once the child's development surpassed the standards, the results were seen as something worth boasting about. For instance, in an entry about buying clothes for Rosie and trying them on her, Rosie-pa records:

She is only four months old, but we have to buy clothes to fit 12 or even 18 month-old [children]. When she was born, she only weighed 3,000 grammes; I used to worry that she wouldn't grow to be big. It seems I am oversensitive. [...] To see her body filling the tiny bathtub [now] makes me feel unspeakably proud. She [her weight] has won at the starting point.

Not only size, but also physical development was included in the survey. When Rosie learned how to walk, Rosie-pa recorded:

You are only eleven months old and you can walk without support. Daddy is so proud of you.

From these two extracts, we can see that the factor of time was mentioned in both cases. This factor of time served the function of highlighting the fact that the development he was talking about was above, or had taken place more quickly than the standards.

This idea of pursuing or surpassing the standards was shown not only in the comparisons the fathers made with the set standards, but also in situations when they met other children. For example, in an entry about a new participant who joined Rosie's playgroup, Rosie-pa wrote: 'He is only eleven months old and he can walk without support, he is amazing!' On another occasion, when Daddy Tom and Ruby met a girl of the same age on their day out, Daddy Tom recorded very little about the other girl's activities; what he noted down was to do with her appearance:

She is eleven days younger than Ruby, [so] how can she have so much hair? She can even use a hairpin. In addition, she now has 8 teeth (and Ruby only has 4). These things make me envious.

Again, the factor of time was mentioned to highlight the quicker (as if better) development. These fathers' practices were thus not confined to pursuing, they were also trying to surpass the official state-set standards. This sense of competition, and other practices related to it, are discussed in more detail in Chapter 6. With regard to the construction of the normal child, I found that the standards set by the state were not the only standards followed by the fathers. From their records, it seems that the official document (the child health handbook) and the practices (recording and screening) it recommended were not the only resource. For example, the terms Daddy Tom used to record Ruby's development, such as gross motor, fine motor, conceptual comprehension and so on, were different from the terms used in the handbook (some of them are different Chinese translations of the same English term). The charts he used had subtle differences from those in the official handbook,



and the milestones are not all the same. Although he did not share his references, it is clear from the above discussion that what has been constructed is a way of viewing a normal child, not necessarily according to the state-set standards. While the legal system and the handbook both imply that there is a great risk involved in overlooking any signs of developmental delay, which is linked to future disabilities, so various daily observations and surveys are needed. If the main target is to prevent or reduce the risk, the official standards could be used as the basis for making a decision; however, they would not be the only one. Apart from random comparisons with other children they met in daily life, other practices were recorded in their blogs that all served the similar purpose of making sure the child was normal and reducing the risk of falling behind.

## **Commercial Forces**

The first practice the fathers reported is their investment in early education materials. As mentioned above, the official child health handbook is too complex for average parents to understand, and there are various books about child-raising on the market that teach parents how to understand the handbook. We could say that these child-raising related materials also help to confirm the idea that there is a set standard (not necessarily the state-set standard) for normality among children, and to provide anxious parents with a way of keeping up with or even surpassing the standards. While these child-raising suggestions are written for the parents, there is also a product called an early education set (a full set of books and training materials, discussed further in the next chapter) on the market. Daddy Tom and Rosie-pa both bought one of these and shared the content of their set and their experience of buying it in the blogs. When introducing Rosie's early education set, Rosie-pa recorded:

I didn't know that the baby needed education materials until I got a call from the Little Bear [an early education material publisher] salesman. After my first shock at the variety of options, I was conscious that I would be spending a fortune on this.

From the above extract, we can see that Rosie-pa was introduced to the necessity of acquiring this kind of product, and it did not take him long to decide that he should purchase one of these sets. Although he did mention one or two materials in this set, such as the black and white book and a stylus pen, Rosie-pa did not review the set in detail. From the materials he mentioned, I found the set, and although it is called ‘early education’, it also includes items for physical training, such as the black and white book, which, according to Rosie-pa, is designed to train the baby’s eyesight. Being curious about what Little Bear is actually selling, I googled the brand and visited their website. On the site they claimed themselves to be an educational organisation. They used professional terminology, such as ‘QDR’ and ‘Toddler Temperament Scale’, similar to the terms the fathers used to describe their children. With regard to the aim of the Little Bear organisation, they said that:

Only parents who have the ability to nurture are qualified parents; only qualified parents can ‘really’ [as if there is a false way to] raise healthy, happy children who can adapt to different environments and solve problems. It is hard work and we are here to help.  
(<http://www.littlebear.com.tw/about.php>)

And again, we can see that the idea of a child as shown in the description includes both the aspect of being healthy (the target of *yang*) and the aspect of having social abilities (the target of *yu*). We can see that physical development was also included under the umbrella of the ‘early education’. The emphasising of education is further discussed in Section 6.4. In the context here, Little Bear’s approach to advertising their product is similar to that found in companies who sell products aimed at mothers. Research into mothers’ consumption (of infant food) has suggested that mothers’ consumption and consumption decisions, influenced by the ideology of intensive mothering, are based on their understanding of what it means to be a good mother and what is good for their child. Researchers have found that mothers try to provide a better choice for the child and at the same time avoid the risk of the child’s being unhealthy (Afflerback, Carter, Anthony, & Grauerholz, 2013; Cairns, Johnston, & MacKendrick, 2013). Among various marketing approaches, online marketing, which combines images and professional-like descriptions, produced the cultural practice and ideals of mothering (Fuentes & Brembeck, 2017). From the

results of my research, we can see that the necessity for these so-called early education products has been created by commercial enterprises who wish to market their products. It was found that they first paint a picture of what a good parent should be, and then use professional-like language to describe the necessity of their products in the practice of good parenting. In a similar way to the mothers' choice of food, the aim of which was to avoid any risk of the child becoming unhealthy, in the case of early education sets, the risk to avoid is the delayed child.

Online information such as the above is one of the main resources for new parents to find (or we may say 'to learn') information about child raising in Taiwan. When searching for child-raising information, according to a public survey, the internet was found to be the main resource for 70 percent of new generation Taiwanese mothers (Les enfants, 2016). Interestingly, the organisation which did the survey and published it online only, mentioned in the survey report that not all information on the internet is correct, as though there is a 'correct' way to raise a child. If there is one, what is it? Who, and according to what, judges what is correct and what is not? This has become a big challenge for new parents. In this situation, a set of materials using professional terms does provide a quick solution for anxious parents who are confused by the complex medical standards of what a normal child is and worry about their child falling below these standards. In summary, we could say that the commercial businesses' approaches to selling their products, the products themselves, and their consumers' (in this case father bloggers) sharing online remind their readers of these risks and co-produce the idea of a normal child.

## **Traditional Practices**

From the information recorded in the blogs used in this research, I found that the seemingly opposed traditional and scientific methods of raising a child are not mutually exclusive. For example, a proverb which describes children's (physical) development - 'seven (month-old) sit, eight crawl, nine grow teeth' - was mentioned and referred to by the fathers in various entries when their children were of a similar

age. When I compared the ideas in this proverb with the standards given in the handbook, they did not appear to conflict with the new medical expectations. We may say that while some traditional ideas, such as ‘a bigger rooster crows later’, have been proven wrong and replaced by the practice of early intervention, the ideas in the above proverb have been proven correct by the modern scientific understanding of what constitutes the medical normal child; it is therefore still permissible to use it. There were, however, other examples which do not correspond with modern ideas.

From the discussion in 5.2.1, we can see that Daddy Tom (Ruby’s father) put a great deal of effort into recording Ruby’s development in detail and in a medical/scientific way. Judging by the terms he used, which were different from those in the handbook, we might infer that he was a scientifically-oriented father who based his ideas on professional suggestions, but this is not what I observed. Among the three fathers, he also gave the most accounts of non-scientific doings. Immediately after Ruby was born, she was taken to a temple to be adopted by a Buddhist goddess. This religious practice is similar to making a guardian contract with a particular god so that the child will be looked after (and blessed) by that god. After the contract was made, the relationship between the god(dess) and the child (Ruby) was described as a parent-child relationship.

One might say that this religious practice was a way of Daddy Tom seeking peace of mind, but another example showed that this may not be the only reason. When Ruby was 2 years and 9 months old, she was taken to ‘have her shock tamed’ in the temple of a famous Taiwanese folk religion (closer to Confucianism). Having a child’s ‘shock tamed’ is a religious practice frequently used to deal with unstable children in Taiwan. When a (usually) stable child turns unstable for an unknown reason -- for example, he or she does not sleep well, keeps crying for no apparent reason -- he or she will be identified as shocked (by the environment, people, or even by ghosts or other spirits). To ‘tame the shock’, the practice involves prayer, calling the child’s soul (which is thought to have been frightened away from the body) back to his/her body, and in cases where the ‘shock’ level is high, the child may be asked to drink water containing a burned amulet. In other words, it is an un-medical and unscientific way of explaining and dealing with an unstable child. The effects of prayer and

amulets would be difficult to prove scientifically, and drinking water containing a burned amulet would not be seen as medically sound; however, Daddy Tom showed no conflict in using both types (scientific and religious) of treatment. In order to find out the reasons for his decisions, I referred to his other doings and records, and found Daddy Tom to be a careful person who tried to prevent risks. For example, he spent money on early education materials and educational toys and linked education to a bright future, but, at the same time, he also bought life insurance for Ruby. The insurance he bought is not for accidents but is closer to a private pension: you pay into the contract for a set number of years and then you can have a monthly return. In other words, if in the end Ruby's education does not give her a job with a secure enough income, there is still this insurance that will enable her to avoid the worst. This personality makes engaging in practices that seem mutually contradictory at the same time understandable: it is, just like the early education set, also risk management. Since the state-set standards are not the only standards, why would the scientific way of problem solving (to see the doctor) be the only option? Methods such as religious practices can thus be used to cover areas not covered by the official suggestions and medical practices.

#### **5.2.4 Summary**

In summary, in this section it has been shown how the concept of what constitutes a normal child in Taiwan is based on scientific knowledge, including the physiology and psychology of the child. Scientific knowledge sets up standards that define which child is normal (which child reaches the milestones in time) and which child is not (which child is delayed). Being enforced by the government, this concept is put into daily practice by the medical institutions, the schooling system and by parents. In short, this norm has been institutionalised. The fathers in this research showed evidence that they had accepted this concept and employed similar concepts and terms to describe their own children and those of other parents; they made great efforts to pursue, or even made sure that their child surpassed, the standard levels and

to compare their children with others. To prevent or reduce the risk of delay, the state-set standards were not seen as the only useful criteria: other information was referenced, commercial forces stepped in, and even traditional and religious practices still had their place. The discussion in this section reveals that the showing and sharing of children's medical details online not only re-enforces the 'intimate surveillance' (parents are to survey their child), but also confirms the way whether or not a child is 'normal' is judged (needs to reach a series of milestones in a set time). In the following section, I focus on Dylan's case as an example of an 'abnormal' child.

### **5.3 In the Case of Abnormality**

From the discussion in the previous section, we can see that, in order to be seen as normal, a child needs to achieve certain medical/scientific standards. However, while 'normal' children were chasing the milestones and competing with other children, Taiwanese researchers found that once a child was judged to be delayed (in a high-risk group), the parents were usually more cautious and conscientious about developments: any tiny delay could be interpreted as a disease or disability by the parents (Tseng, 2010). In the following section, I describe Dylan and his father's interactions around 'making tea' in order to demonstrate the effects of professional judgements. In Chapter 4 I showed how, before Dylan was diagnosed, his father's recordings focus on how they taught Dylan; after the diagnosis, by contrast, the focus was on his 'symptoms'. In terms of the two recording periods, the theme of tea making is the only one which appears both before and after Dylan's diagnosis. It gives us a very good opportunity to see the differences between the two periods and to observe the influence of the defining norm.

### 5.3.1 Making Tea in Taiwan

To give the reader a better understanding of what was happening in these tea-making activities, a brief introduction to the practice of making tea in Taiwanese culture would be helpful. In Taiwan (and some other East Asian countries), making (or brewing) tea can be a complex process. It can be a hobby for an individual to practise on his or her own; at the same time, it can also be a social activity: friends sit around the tea table and chat while the host keeps brewing tea for everyone. A basic tea set includes a small pottery teapot that is usually no bigger than a fist, a serving container and some small teacups. The teacup is smaller than a shot glass and can only hold sips of tea. Given the fact that the tea set is small, the process of making tea is not a one-off action but a continuous process: pour the boiled water into the teapot, wait for around a minute, pour the brewed tea into the serving container or cups, and another round follows straight away. After five or six rounds, it is necessary to change the brewed tea leaves. To keep this process going without interrupting the conversation, there are usually containers for waste water and waste leaves, and a kettle (with a gas fire or electric heat source to keep the water at nearly boiling temperature) right beside the tea set. For those who take it more seriously, the process (including the tea leaves, water temperature and time) can involve an enormous amount of attention to detail; even the quality of the teapot can influence the flavour of the tea. To such people, teapots are precious collector items. To bring out the capacity of a good pot, you will need to ‘*yang* (the same character for rearing a child)’ the pot with tea properly. This process of *yang* the pot involves ‘feeding’ the pot with tea on the inside and outside, sometimes with a brush. By doing so, it is believed that the pot will suck tea into the surface of the pot itself and, as a result, makes the tea made by this pot tastier. Having briefly introduced the practice of making tea in Taiwanese culture, in the following part I present the data in the manner of telling a story, and discuss the meaning of the shown practice between Dylan’s father and Dylan. I should point out that the story told in following section is my re-telling, based on the information revealed and represented in Dylan’s blog.

### 5.3.2 Making Tea with Dylan

Dylan's father mentioned making tea in his blog many times. Sentences such as 'one day, when I was making tea' or 'my teapots' are featured in various entries. In one of his stories about making tea with Dylan, his description of making tea paid great attention to detail, presenting him as a serious tea maker who had several pots and had it as a hobby. According to the blog entries, having seen his father making tea in their living space, Dylan started to show an interest in tea making when he was 1 year and 3 months old. Although Dylan was lightly scalded once or twice by the hot teapot, he always wanted to 'help' with his father's tea making. Dylan's father started to teach Dylan the process of making tea when he was one and a half (Dylan had not then yet been diagnosed), and recorded:

I started to teach him to be my helper so that he could learn to obey instructions and to understand the concept of sequence.

Because my room is tiny, to start to make tea is a troublesome mission. I have to take different things out from different storage places and tidy everything back afterward, not to mention the fact that the process of making tea properly is complex. [...]

After a period of time, apart from warming the pot with boiling water, he could carry out the whole process correctly. I feel quite proud, because I have never seen a child under 2 making tea properly. We don't have many opportunities to do something together and now I have found the very thing to do with him.

From knowing nothing, he can now practise it without my instructions; he can even remind me to do the next step when I lag behind. He always sits nicely beside me, makes tea with me. He is truly a little helper. [...] He really likes to make tea and concentrates on each detail. It makes me feel that an earnest child is the prettiest one.



From the extract above, we can see that Dylan's father introduced other learning targets (learn to obey instructions, to understand the concept of sequence) to the learning of making tea. This type of description is similar to the descriptions of children's development that appear in Ruby's and Rosie's blogs. It indicates that Dylan's father was also influenced by a particular scientific way of understanding the child and the act of raising a child. We can also see that Dylan's father was proud of Dylan and saw the time of making tea with Dylan as a precious father-son time. In Chapter 4, I mentioned that Dylan's father indicated that photographs could not show the real Dylan and seldom featured photographs of Dylan in his blog. However, in this instance, a photograph of Dylan with a serious face (the earnest child), helping to lift the teapot was featured. This could be seen as evidence that Dylan's father was proud of this achievement by his son: this positive Dylan was worth sharing in public.

Unfortunately, this 'happy time' sometimes turned into trouble. For example, the following incident was recorded by Dylan's father: on one occasion Dylan was taken (without his father) to visit a friend of Dylan's grandfather. After dinner, the host invited them to stay to make tea. However, according to Dylan's grandfather, because Dylan kept trying to touch the host's teapots and wanting to 'help', the tea making turned into chaos. The grandparents felt embarrassed, took the child and left early. After they got home, they told Dylan's father the story and warned him not to carry on teaching Dylan to make tea. 'Other people will think we are not teaching (*jiao*) him. It shows bad upbringing,' warned the grandfather. The grandparents' warning again shows that the act of bringing up (raising) a child contains the aspect of teaching. However, it also shows a contradiction: when Dylan's father taught Dylan to make tea, it resulted in others thinking that the family did not teach the child. And to make others think that they did teach the child, the grandfather suggested that Dylan's father should *stop* teaching Dylan (to make tea). This suggests that the idea of teaching here not only includes particular knowledge, skills or abilities, but also includes social roles and social expectations of the child: not everything should be taught to a child, a child should be taught not to touch the host's things, a child should not be taught to make tea.

In the same entry, after the story has been told, Dylan's father expressed his thought: 'It's only because other people don't believe a two-year old child can make tea.' Believing that Dylan was a quicker learner than most children, he continued to allow Dylan to join in his tea making. Apart from being able to make tea with him, he also recorded Dylan's other positive developments: Dylan could find any one of the 130 English songs he played in the book more quickly than he could, and Dylan could do a 40-piece jigsaw puzzle. This attitude is again in line with that of the other two fathers in this research: the quicker the better.

However, at the same time, Dylan's father and mother noticed that Dylan's language development was slower than it should have been according to the health handbook. By the age of two, according to Dylan's father's record, no meaningful words, not even papa or mama, had come out of Dylan's mouth. He and his wife were worried about it and faced strong pressure from friends and other family members who expressed doubts about Dylan's development. Dylan's parents, however, were more convinced by the positive indications mentioned above: he may be slower in this field, but he is better in other fields. Their reasoning confirms Tseng's (2010a) finding that parents tend to believe their children are normal - just different from or a bit slower than other children - and will defend their children's normality using references from theories on child raising that are different from the state-sanctioned theories, or highlighting their quicker developments in certain areas.

By the time Dylan was two and a half and still had said nothing, however, the pressure was too high to bear. 'It drives us nuts,' his father recorded, regarding the strong pressure of other people's doubts. Believing Dylan to be normal, in order to silence other people, they decided to take him to the hospital to be checked over, but the results were not what they expected. His father quoted from the report in his blog: 'suspected with Autism, wide-ranging developmental delay, speech and language impairment.' As I mentioned in Chapter 4, he described this news as a 'bolt from the blue' and Dylan's condition as his having an 'incurable disease'. Just as the old proverb 'a bigger rooster crows later' had been proven wrong, his judgement had now been proven wrong. He gave up the idea of 'nurturing' his child, changed the verb to 'training' and his activities with Dylan, including making tea, changed.

### 5.3.3 No More Making Tea with Dylan

After Dylan was diagnosed with autism, Dylan's father continued with the father-son tea making time until one day when Dylan became out of control. According to the story Dylan's father told, on that day during the tea making, Dylan's mother came home and started to play happily with Dylan. All of a sudden, Dylan went mad (Dylan's father's description), ran to the tea table and overturned all the pots. From that day on, this happened every day. After some observation, Dylan's father found that when Dylan heard the clanging sound of the pot lid being put on, he snapped. He guessed that maybe this was because Dylan liked to do that particular act and make the sound himself. If he missed it and heard that his father had done it, he snapped. He also found that, if he invited Dylan to put the lid on for him, everything was fine. Having discovered the possible reason, he first tried to avoid making the sound. This was practically quite difficult and made him feel like a 'thief' (his choice of word) when he was only trying to enjoy his hobby. He finally got sick of it and decided to ban Dylan from all the tea making activities. His description of Dylan changed: 'concentration' and 'earnest' are re-defined as 'obstacle' and 'stubborn behaviour' and he tried various ways to help Dylan to overcome these negative types of behaviour and to strengthen Dylan's 'snap resistance', by which he meant the ability to control himself to a certain extent. He explained his decision as follows:

It [putting the lid on] is a tiny detail no one will care about. It may be a ritual for him, but he needs to know how to control himself. He has a long future; he will meet different people, different teachers and different classmates in the future. In order to have a peaceful life, to ensure he will not go mad, to ensure he will not cry and affect other people's daily lives, I could tell everyone about all his little rituals. But this would only be indulging him in his rituals. If I don't change him, it will have a serious effect on his life: it is impossible to ask everyone he meets to join in with his rituals.

In order to keep Dylan away from the tea making, he used hot water from the kettle to scald Dylan lightly and told him it was hot whenever Dylan came close to his tea table and teapots. He recorded:

In the beginning, during the hour of tea making, I would have to scald Dylan at least five times. [...] Now he does not dare to come close to my tea table and will not cry even when he hears the clang. I can again enjoy my tea making with ease. [...] But it also means that I have lost my little helper and the precious father-son time we used to have. Why is my child such a person?

From the story, we can see that a medical/official diagnosis had the decisive power strong enough to overthrow an individual's experience: Dylan's caring about every detail had been understood as his being earnest and his father had been proud of it, but after the diagnosis of autism and of Dylan's development being delayed had been made, this same characteristic was redefined as an obstacle and stubborn behaviour. Not only were the daily doings understood differently, the term he used to describe his practices of raising Dylan had also changed from 'nurturing' to 'training'. This training could be cruel (e.g., scalding the child) and the aim of the training was to make Dylan give up his stubborn behaviour and to control his moods so that he could be closer to normal, and fit in with the normal society in the future. The sentence 'If I don't change him' also revealed Dylan's father's presumption that training can change Dylan. In short, the target was to normalise the child.

### **5.3.4 Normalising an Abnormal Child**

Although developmental delay is positioned somewhere in between normal and disabled in the legal system, to Dylan's father as he described autism as a 'incurable disease', it is much closer to disabled. Ever since the diagnosis, the term 'normal' has been regularly used in Dylan's father's writings and his target had been to normalise Dylan. Here I show some examples of his mentioning of normality:

When a normal child makes a mistake or does not listen to the parents, corporal punishment is inevitably used as a means to teach them.

When bringing up a normal child, if you give him space and proper education, he will develop the ability of self-learning. Too much intervention may limit their development, so that parents can bring up the child easily. But it is the reverse for a delayed child. I need to continuously intervene with my child to prevent him from crashing [the term used to describe a computer which stops responding] and becoming totally autistic.

I do know he is abnormal, but I don't want him to lose too much.

From these extracts, we can see that what is 'normal' was not clearly defined in Dylan's father's mind. The examples of normality he gave are sometimes controversial. For example, the idea that using corporal punishment is a necessary and effective way of teaching a normal child has been criticised for a long time. A recent research study argued that corporal punishment, although still often used in North American families, is associated with harm to the well-being of the child and is closely associated with the physical abuse of a child (Zolotor, 2014). Bringing up a child, even when s/he fits the standards of normality, might not be as easy as Dylan's father expected, as revealed in the current research by the parental anxiety expressed in the other two blogs. And again, we can see the sense of competition revealed: even though he considered that Dylan might not be able to participate in the 'normality game', he still wrote that, "I don't want him to lose too much."

In the discussion earlier in this chapter, it was shown that the normal child in these blogs was defined by the legal system using medical/scientific knowledge, and that the idea that there are standards which can be used to differentiate between normal and abnormal (delayed and/or disabled) has been institutionalised. This method (medical model) of identifying a child as abnormal (or normal) has been criticised by those who support the social model of disability. In the tradition of the social model of disability, scholars (e.g., Barnes, Mercer & Shakespeare, 1999; Oliver, 1993) have argued that disability should be examined socially. In medical models, disabled

people are seen as defectives, and because of their defects, they need to be fixed. They are not acceptable as they are (French, 1993). In many cases, they argued, it is the environment that disables these people (for example, stairs restrict the movement of people in wheelchairs). Disabled people are abnormal only because they do not correspond with society's view of what is normal (usually from a medical point of view) (Abberley, 1993; Morris, 1993). To social model scholars, it is the norm and social barriers, not the individual that should be changed. Although the social model has been criticised for not always being adequate to explain different personal experiences of being disabled (Mallett & Runswick-Cole, 2014), seeing this idea as a political tool (Oliver, 2013), it has been argued that the social model has helped (mainly U.K) society to identify and challenge many social barriers, and thus the social situation of disabled people has been improved (Levitt, 2017). However, Woods (2017) argued that although the social model of disability has changed the situation for people with physical and sensory impairments, it is not practised for those who have been labelled autistic. Woods thus suggested expanding the idea of the social model and seeing the negative language and discourse of the autism label as the social barriers autistics face.

Scholars such as the above, who wish to challenge the norm and change the situation produced by the medical model in which disabled people lack agency, have seen parents of disabled children as being in alliance with the professionals who are trying to 'normalise' their children (McLaughlin, 2006). For example, in Finkelstein's (1998) view, parents are 'non-disabled' competitors, whose main goal is assimilation:

It is obvious that the duel between 'care' and 'support' involved a number of players. Apart from the expanding body of professionals, the main non-disabled contender for the right to determine the direction of facilities and services in the community were parents of disabled children. Parents, however, are already in a 'care' relationship with their children and, as well-intentioned and responsible adults, want the best for them. For the vast majority this will mean that they want them to be like themselves, as 'normal' as possible. Unlike their disabled children, however, parents are actively pursuing the goal of 'assimilation' into mainstream society (Finkelstein, 1998, p. 5)

From the tea-making story told by Dylan's father, we can see the decisive power of the medical framework for understanding a child who is different from other children, and Dylan's father's practices conformed to the scholars' accusation that parents try very hard to 'normalise' their delayed or disabled children.

However, we should not simply position the parents of disabled children on the opposing side to disabled people. In some cases (for example, people with learning difficulties), disabled people may need their carers/parents to speak or even fight for them (McLaughlin, 2006; Shakespeare, 2006). Thus in Shakespeare's (2006) view, disability studies should not turn possible allies into enemies. Parents of disabled people may not be disabled themselves, but their experiences should not be excluded from the study of disability.

It has also been suggested by scholars that the condition of disability not only affected the disabled individual but also influenced the carer (usually a parent) (Beresford, 1994; Broberg, 2011; Shih, 2012). For example, researchers have found that parents of disabled children also suffer from the stigma which is attached to the disability (Green, 2003, 2007). Further, parents of different classes, sex and race can have different experiences of raising a disabled child (Barker & Iantaffi, 2015; Barnes & Mercer, 2007; Vernon & Swain, 2002) and they do not share exactly the same view of their child's disability as the professionals. In some instances, they describe their child as 'an individual who has limitations and difficulties arising from the disabling condition' (Beresford, 1994, p.59). This kind of description is closer to that found in social model disability studies. Researchers have also suggested that, even in the medical model, parents do not necessarily accept every judgement and decision made by the professionals. Since parents engage in more therapeutic practices than the professionals in the daily practice of taking care of a disabled child (Leiter, 2004), they use their daily experiences as evidence to challenge (or negotiate with) the professions (Shih, 2012). For example, they might reduce the amount of medicine for a while (and find that the child was still alright) to prove that the child did not need so much medicine. In the same research, Shih also found that mothers who work in a related (medical or educational) professional field have more power to argue with, or even make demands on, other professionals. According to these

mothers, however, they were usually seen as ‘difficult parents’. Even with a related professional identity, it is still difficult for mothers to overturn professional judgements and decisions.

If we take Dylan’s father as an example, taking his social status into account, it is possible to see that some of the practices he engaged in when trying to ‘normalise’ his child were not entirely his ‘fault’ as social model scholars would claim. In various entries he mentioned his concern about jobs and household income. For example, he could not afford to pay for a teaching assistant offered by the nursery himself. This not only reveals that his family’s financial resources were limited, but also shows that the statutory support was poor. Being a builder, which is not a medical related profession, he could have been as powerless as a disabled person in the face of medical judgements. In Shih’s (2012) research, she argued that for parents who cannot change the norm, or who believe that they cannot, normalising their children in such a way and to such an extent that they will not suffer too much might be one of the better solutions that is actually within their grasp (Shih, 2012). This was exactly the intention that Dylan’s father had showed: to normalise Dylan so that he can feed himself in the future.

In this section, I have used Dylan’s father’s accounts of making tea with Dylan to discuss the decisive power of the medically/scientifically-defined norm. From the stories he told, I found differences before and after the diagnosis. The medical diagnosis affected Dylan’s father’s understanding of the same activity, and was powerful enough to overturn his approach with Dylan. Thus, the case of an ‘abnormal’ child reveals the power of the institutional and social views of what constitutes normality even more clearly than the cases of normal children.

## 5.4 Conclusion

In this chapter, I have examined how the (medical) normal child is constructed in Taiwan. Since the idea of developmental delay was legalised in the 1990s, the



medical view of a normal child has been widely accepted by Taiwanese society. The enormous number of developmental screening tables are like quality checklists on a production line, through the surveys and screening done by the parents, medical institutions and educational institutions, to check whether a child is a qualified product. Medical knowledge, interpretations and practices work together to produce the concept of a 'normal' child. When the father bloggers shared their children's development and put these screening items and charts online, they were reinforcing this concept and joining forces with those who espouse the ideas of normalisation, intimate surveillance, and the institutional way of defining a normal child.

On this 'production line', which turns out normal children, it is important to keep up with, or even surpass the standards. It was revealed in the three blogs that wherever a defect was found, not only did the child and the family face the pressure of other people's doubts, but also the individual's differences were treated pathologically, and were strongly linked to disability, which was also treated pathologically. The efforts Dylan's father made, as shown in the blog, to normalise Dylan also demonstrate that, when statutory support is limited, parents who have limited resources and capacity to change the norm or the society do not have much choice but to 'normalise' their children so that they might face less pressure in the future.

The final aspect which was revealed by the blogs but was not discussed in detail in this chapter is competition. Not only were the 'normal' children pursuing the standards, but also the development of one child was often compared with that of another. The quicker, the taller, and the heavier children were described as the winners. Even in the case of Dylan, who had been diagnosed as delayed, Dylan's father states, 'I don't want him to lose too much' to describe his expectations. In the next chapter, another aspect of the fathers' raising of their children, nurturing, is examined, and the version of Taiwanese childhood reflected in this nurturing is discussed.

## Chapter 6 Nurturing a Taiwanese Child

### 6.1 Introduction

In Chapter 5, I discussed how the normal child is constructed in Taiwanese society and represented in the baby blogs referred to in this thesis. We have seen that the fathers of ‘normal’ children followed the concept of the medical view of a normal child to survey their children and to pursue the standards. Dylan’s father’s efforts to try and normalise Dylan provided another side of the story, but also showed the decisive power of the medical view of a normal child. In this chapter, the focus of my discussion is on the child as reflected in the fathers’ nurturing. From the ideas and practices of nurturing displayed by the fathers, I identified three concepts that directed their nurturing: gender stereotypes and gendered aspirations, early education, and competition.

The three concepts were identified with the assistance of the cultural frames analysis proposed by Fisher (1997). To identify the cultural frame, Fisher employed Donati’s (1992) method, and argued that “the researcher should be able to interchange the cultural frame for the topic of the text without changing the meaning of the text” (Fisher, 1997, 5.5). Here I provide an example from my data to explain what it means: ‘You (parent) should do X so that your child will not lose at the starting point’, where X may be uses early education materials, is vaccinated, survey his or her development, or even corporally punished. In this case, ‘not to lose at the starting point’ is the cultural frame which directs the parents’ doings, and the frame can be adopted by different, or even mutually contradictory ideologies. In order to explain these nurturing practices and the concepts that influenced these practices, I bring the cultural and political economic background of Taiwan into the discussion.

I start this chapter by discussing gender stereotypes and (gendered) aspirations. Traditionally, there are different aspirations for girls and boys in Han families: boys are to carry on the family name, to continue the family line and to bring glory to the

family, while girls are to find a good husband and to manage the (husband's) family. Therefore, families usually invest more education resources in boys, while girls are nurtured to be attractive wives-to-be (Xu & Yeung, 2013). My data show that some of these differences still exist, but some of the aspirations for girls have changed, especially with regard to the investment in education. In the second section of the chapter, I discuss the emphasis on education of the fathers. I introduce the concept of filial obedience as a way to understand the investment in education. In the third section, I discuss the sense and practices of competition which I indicate are closely related to the social-economic environment in Taiwan. From the data, we will see that childhood in Taiwan, as shown by these fathers, is not only a period of preparing for the competition to come, but also that children start taking part in competitions before they are a year old.

## 6.2 Han People, Chinese and Taiwanese

Before I discuss the findings of this research, a short historical background to the country enables the reader to understand the terms 'Han', 'Chinese' and 'Taiwanese' as used in the chapter.

The ethnic composition in Taiwan is quite complex. Calculated from the monthly statistics on population provided by the Ministry of the Interior (2013), nearly 98% of the Taiwanese population are Han people who migrated from mainland China at different times. There are at least 14 different aboriginal peoples (2% of the Taiwanese population) in Taiwan (Ministry of the Interior, 2013). Within the Han populations, there is considerable diversity, owing to the complexities of politics. Politically, Taiwan was a Japanese colony from 1895-1945. After World War II, the Japanese government gave Taiwan back to the legal government of China, the Republic of China (ROC), which was led by the Kuomintang (KMT, or Nationalist Party) in 1945. However soon after WWII, the long lasting civil war in mainland China between the KMT and the Communist Party of China (from the 1930s) again became intense and, by 1949, the KMT had lost every battle on the mainland and

fled to Taiwan. The same year, the People's Republic of China (PRC) was founded in mainland China by the Communist Party, and the ROC continued her rule in Taiwan.

During the early years of the Cold War period, the ROC was the legitimate representative of China (which is also one of the five countries on the Security Council) at the UN and was supported by the United States in playing the role of front liner in blocking the 'invasion' of communism (Wakabayashi, 2004). However, it was taking too long in the eyes of the international community for the KMT government to regain the land in mainland China, and it was also difficult for the international community to overlook the fact that the PRC was more like the 'real' China. In 1971, the PRC became the lawful representative of China at the UN, and therefore the ROC left the UN and lost most of her diplomatic relations. After all these years, however, the ROC government still claims that the ROC is the 'real' China and the area of mainland China (including the territory of the PRC and Mongolia) is still the ROC's territory according to the ROC's constitution.

Owing to this complex history, in all the textbooks in Taiwan all residents of the ROC are simply called Chinese. However, in daily life, Han people who migrated to the island before WWII are usually referred to as 'Taiwanese', in contrast to those who migrated with the ROC government after WWII who are referred to as 'Mainlanders (people from another province)'. In recent years, the concept and usage of the terms Taiwanese, Mainlander and Chinese have also been influenced by an individual's political position: people who support unification with mainland China (now or later) tend to refer to themselves as Chinese; people who are for independence (or for forming a new state to replace the ROC), either 'Mainlanders' or 'Taiwanese', tend to refer to themselves as Taiwanese and only use the term 'Chinese' to refer to citizens of the PRC. All the three families who took part in this research are Han people, but it is difficult to identify their political position: therefore I do not know if they are (political) Taiwanese or Chinese. Being aware of this complexity, and in order to prevent further confusion, I decided to use the term Han people/culture to refer to this culture that is usually called 'Chinese' in the West. When the Han people referred to are living in Taiwan, I use the term Taiwanese Han people; when the people referred to are living in mainland China, the term Chinese

Han people is used. When I use Taiwanese alone, it refers to the people (despite ethnic difference) of the ROC; by the same logic, Chinese refers to the people of the PRC.

### **6.3 Gender Stereotypes and Gendered Aspirations**

The first nurturing factor found in this study concerns gender. When using the term ‘gender’, I follow the usage of this concept as an analytical category to differentiate between biological sex and gender: the cultural/social construction of different sex (Cranny-Francis, Waring, Stavropolulos, & Kirkby, 2003; Pilcher & Whelehan, 2004). The concept of gender is about the behaviour, ability or appearance attached to individuals of a particular sex in a particular culture and/or society. For example, the growing charts shown in Chapter 5 indicate the normal sizes of girls and boys differently. This reveals an aspect of biological sexual difference. The issues discussed in this section are not related to sex, however, but to gender: to how a baby of a particular biological sex is described and nurtured, and what expectations there are of him or her.

This finding of this research was that the shown (gendered) doings in these blogs reproduce the gender stereotypes of girls and boys, and reinforce the different aspirations for girls and boys. The fact that parents have different aspirations for sons and daughters is not peculiar to Han society. In Western society, it is also common to name boys and girls differently, to dress them differently, and to expect them to behave differently: for instance, to encourage boys not to cry because they are boys (Maccoby, 2000). These gendered aspirations do not only exist within families. Researchers have also found that in early education organisations, such as kindergarten and primary schools, girls and boys played differently, and the differences seemed to be in line with certain gender stereotypes. Further, heterosexuality was generally seen as the norm (Blaise, 2005; Thorne, 1993). As outlined above, gender is the cultural/social construction of sex. The different treatments and expectations attached to the different sexes could be different in

different cultural/social backgrounds. In this section, I follow this logic and use my data to discuss the different characters, appearances and aspirations attached to the children based on their sex at birth to add to the understanding of this topic. Taking the position that gender is a socially constructed performance (Butler, 2004; West & Zimmerman, 2009), it appears that the gendered nurturing shown in these blogs is also a force for constructing or reproducing gender norms in Taiwanese society.

### 6.3.1 Gender Stereotypes

Several extracts from the blogs used in this research in the current research show that the fathers expected girls and boys to be different in character. Mainly because the main characters in Rosie's and Ruby's blogs are girls, the image of the boy was not as clear. From the limited number of references to the subject, however, Rosie-pa did reveal that he thinks boys are naturally active. For instance, on one occasion when Rosie-pa's playgroup rented an expensive hotel room with a swimming pool for their playgroup day out, the caption of a photograph featuring some of the boys in the pool says: 'They are boys indeed. As soon as they saw the pool they jumped right in'. From the large number of photographs shown in the same entry, the girls were also playing actively in the pool, but only boys were described as active. This stereotype appears even more clearly in a comment on another entry in Rosie's blog. When a mother (a member of the playgroup) praised the photographs of her son taken by Rosie-pa, she mentioned that it was difficult to take a proper photograph of her son as he was always moving and it made focusing difficult. Rosie-pa replied: 'It is natural for boys to be active.'

While boys were described as naturally active, girls, on the other hand, were described as naturally tender and caring. For example, above a photograph of Rosie looking at her newborn sister in the hospital, Rosie-pa captioned "Girls are born tender and caring. She [Rosie] is already like a big sister", without giving much information about what Rosie was doing on the occasion. Other than being caring

and tender, a feminine characteristic described as ‘flirty’ appeared in both the girls’ blogs many times. Here is one example:

Are all girls born with the innate ability to wrap men around their little finger? Ruby loves to cling to me. It is great to have a daughter. [The caption of a photograph of Ruby and Daddy Tom clinging to each other.]

The word ‘flirty’ is used as a translation for ‘撒嬌 (*sa-jiao*)’, but the term does not exactly mean to flirt. *Sa-jiao* is a complex idea and there is not a single English term that reflects the idea completely. In daily use, *sa-jiao* is a feminine (gendered) verb, which includes different actions and attitudes. For example, when a young child clings to or sweet-talks his/her parents, the child’s action may be described as *sa-jiao*. When a child wants something or wants the parents to do something for the child, if the child uses a soft way, such as saying please in a sweet voice, to express him/herself, it can be described as *sa-jiao*. In general, it is acceptable for those who are thought to be weaker (women or children) to engage in this sort of act but it is not totally acceptable for those who are thought to be stronger (older boys and men) to do so. We can see this unspoken rule revealed elsewhere. For example, Rosie-pa quoted from an article in an online magazine (the report was also posted in Rosie’s blog), in which the reporter had written, “just like most fathers, Rosie-pa does not *sa-jiao* to his daughter, ...”. While older boys and men are expected not to *sa-jiao* anymore, it is all right for girls to *sa-jiao* even after they become adults. When a woman uses a flirty approach to get others to help or to have things done in her way, the action can also be described as *sa-jiao*.

Back to the translated extract above, both the “ability to wrap men around their little finger” and “cling to” are *sa-jiao* in the original sentence. The reason I finally decided to translate the same term using different English terms in this paragraph is to reflect the usage in the context and also to prevent any possible uncomfortable misunderstanding that may result from using the word ‘flirt’ to describe the interaction between father and daughter. From the extract, it appears that Daddy Tom did enjoy Ruby’s clinging on and he describes *sa-jiao* as an innate ability of girls.

From the above details we can see that in the girls' blogs, girls and boys were described as being 'naturally' different in character, and gender stereotypes are revealed: while boys were thought to be active, girls were thought to be caring and flirty.

### 6.3.2 Gender Socialisation

In addition to character, I found that the fathers expressed their concern about the appearance of the girls much more than that of the boys. Their valuing of appearance was reflected in the blogs in two ways: the first concerns the way the girl dressed, and the second concerns certain standards of beauty. In short, a girl needs to be dressed like a girl and to look like a girl.

With regard to dress, both Rosie's and Ruby's blogs featured entries on their clothes and accessories, and some of them were posted in the form of a fashion show: a string of photographs of the girl dressed up in various newly bought dresses. From the fathers' description, we can also see that a certain amount of time and money were spent on dressing the girls up. For example, Rosie-pa mentioned that some of the dresses were bought online from a foreign website and they had to wait several weeks for the dresses to arrive. The brand of clothes is also important. Daddy Tom drew attention to the fact that a formal dress was made by Mimososa in Japan, and Rosie-pa also tended to single out the different brands of clothes he had bought: this is from Zara, that is from Les enfants, and so on. A comment below an entry of Rosie's fashion show said:

The benefit of having a girl is that you can rightly buy more clothes for her. She is so fortunate to have a fashion show at her young age. This is her happiness.

While fathers had the 'benefit' of 'rightly' spending a lot on dressing girls up, it seemed less important to dress boys up. Although my data on baby boys are limited, so I am unable to say that there are obvious differences when the baby is a boy, it is also a fact that I could not find any entry that focused on what Dylan's wore in



Dylan's blog. And from the limited number of entries which featured photographs of Dylan, the way he dressed was more casual and simple compared to the two well-dressed girls.

In addition to the way they dressed, the captions for the girls' photographs reveal that certain standards of beauty were applied to describe and judge girls. For example, there were many examples in which the fathers joked about their chubby babies:

You look chubby, but it's all right. People say that clothes make the man. This Hello-Kitty blanket is very cute; let's cover you with this so that people will focus on that and overlook your fat cheeks. (The caption to a photograph from Ruby's blog)

No, no, I'm not chubby, I'm very skinny. (The caption to a photograph from Ruby's blog)

She is very beautiful. If her legs could be longer and thinner, she would be even more beautiful. (The caption to a photograph of Rosie at her birthday party)

She blew up like a balloon right after that. We might have fed her too much. We almost turned her into Yan Guifei [Imperial Consort Yang, a famous chubby female figure in Chinese history]. Fortunately, we stepped on the brake in time. (Reply to a comment posted under Rosie's birthday party record)

Dressed like this she looks thin; she is getting more and more beautiful. (The caption to a photographic fashion show in Rosie's blog)

From these different quotations, we can see that chubby/fat vs skinny/thin was a common way of judging a girl's appearance which appeared repeatedly in the blogs. Although these captions and feedback all indicate that the father bloggers tended to see thin girls as being more beautiful, they did not exactly try to rear the girls to be thin. It is more like a joke, or even showing off. As I discussed in Chapter 5, the fathers cared a great deal about whether the child's weight was above a certain percentage on the chart, and, if it fell below this, they would try hard to make it up. Having a chubby baby, then, could be seen as an indication that they had done their

parenting job, in the case of rearing, properly. However, these captions still reveal the standard of beauty and the practice of commenting on girls' outward appearance.

In addition to thinness, big eyes, a small mouth, a lighter skin colour and long hair were all featured in different descriptions. These standards of beauty in some cases turned into problems that needed to be fixed. For example, Daddy Tom showed his concern about Ruby's hair in various entries. One of them is when they were cutting Ruby's hair for the first time. There is a child-related Han cultural practice, which is to cut all the baby's baby hair off and use the hair to make a brush pen. As a pen is a symbol for writing, this pen is thought to be related to the child's future academic achievement. Rosie and her sister both had their hair cut and Rosie-pa shared and reviewed the baby hair pen maker he used with his readers. Daddy Tom expressed his view of the importance of making this pen and explained the linkage between the pen and the child's future academic achievement; however, when they were cutting Ruby's hair, Daddy Tom mentioned that he did not cut all Ruby's hair off because she is a girl. A later story elaborates on this idea that girls should have long hair in order to be recognised as girls. In this story, Ruby's family met their online friend – another family with a baby girl the same age, one year old then – off-line. The girl they met also had short hair and the mother shared her experience that her daughter was usually mistaken for a baby boy. To solve this 'problem', she bought a set of wigs for her daughter. It again shows the stereotype of a girl's outward appearance and the parent's effort to dress a girl like a girl.

### 6.3.3 Gendered Aspirations

Not only are the character and appearance of boys and girls understood differently, the future of boys and girls are also imagined differently in these blogs. Immediately after Dylan was diagnosed, Dylan's father recorded:

I expected to be able to raise a genius; if not, at least he would be smarter than other kids. [...] Could he become another [Albert] Einstein, or another [Thomas Alva] Edison?

While the imagined future of a boy revealed in this blog was related to his occupation, such as an inventor or a scientist, a girl's future was imagined differently, especially in Ruby's blog. The story of Daddy Tom deciding Ruby's (Han-characters) name is an example of this. Naming a child can be tricky in Taiwan, especially in Han culture. The year, month, day and time (of the agricultural calendar) all play a part in influencing the child's life (a similar idea to astrology). According to these elements, the child will be born with strengths as well as weaknesses and flaws. However, these are not unchangeable. A good naming professional can suggest characters with certain strokes or with a particular radical (for example, tree, soil, grass, female, fire, water, metal and so on) to enhance the strengths and fix, weaken, or redress any shortcomings (similar to the idea of numerology). When there are tens of thousands of characters to choose from and each may have different influences, if you do believe in these, it can be very tricky. When Daddy Tom was choosing the characters to name Ruby, he consulted a naming professional and he finally decided to pick the characters which would ensure that Ruby would be 'loved by her (future) husband'. In another example in the caption to a photograph of a one-month old Ruby, without any context, Daddy Tom wrote: 'I wonder where my prince on a white horse is?'

In order to understand their gendered ways of nurturing, I looked at the traditional roles for men and women in a Han family. Traditionally, men's and women's roles in the family are described as 男主外, 女主內 (*nan zhu wai, nu zhu nei*). The meaning of this description is: men should take care of the things outside the house; women should take care of the things inside the house. In other words, men are expected to go out and to earn the family's living; women are expected to be the householder and child carer. To reproduce this kind of men and women, boys and girls are brought up in different ways and there are different expectations of them. Boys are expected to carry on the family name and to continue the family line; girls are thought to belong to their (future) husbands' families. Therefore, boys usually receive more (educational) resources so that the family's future will be secured (Xu & Yeung, 2013). Since a girl's future is related to her husband's family, for a girl's father, the responsibility is thus to:

...secure a good marriage for his daughter. As such, the emphasis for girls' upbringing had been on cultivating their beauty and virtues of obedience, modesty, and morality (Xu & Yeung, 2013, p. 185).

In Ruby's case, we can see that the traditional aspirations for and practices of bringing up girls are expressed in Daddy Tom's writing: the notion of a girl's happy future was still strongly related to her husband, and cultivating a beautiful girl was still important.

In this section, I have discussed the gender stereotypes and gendered aspirations for boys and girls. In a cultural background that is closer to Taiwan, Chen and Rao's (2011) research on gender socialisation in kindergartens in Hong Kong also suggested that teachers treated boys and girls differently (not gender neutral). Their findings also suggested that not only the children's characters (for example, active or quiet) were linked to the individual's sex, but that traditional Han cultural gender values and aspirations were also repeated and revealed in the kindergartens' daily teaching. The findings of this research show that similar treatments and descriptions using gender stereotypes began immediately after the child was born, including character and appearance, and the child's imagined future was also gendered. While boys were described as naturally active, girls were described as naturally tender, caring and 'flirty'. While boys could be dressed casually, it was seen as appropriate for girls to be dressed up, and their appearance was critiqued (even tweaked using a wig), openly applying standards such as thinness, big eyes, small lips, long legs, lighter skin colour and long hair. While the imagined future of boys included occupations such as inventors or scientists, a girl's happiness was described as being linked to getting a good husband. These aspirations are still similar to the traditional ones. However, the data in this research also revealed new aspirations for girls, especially with regard to investment in education. In the following section I discuss this new, or, since the old aspiration of beauty and bride-to-be still exist, additional aspiration for girls.

## 6.4 Emphasis on Education

As shown above, the traditional gender stereotypes still play a role, but the nurturing processes recorded in this research reveal that the aspirations for girls were not limited to their beauty and finding a good husband. Although, because of the limitations of the research methodology, it is impossible to know how the fathers actually nurtured their girls, the entries and photographs relating to Ruby's and Rosie's rooms, toys and other things revealed what their fathers thought was important to present. When discussing material culture and its relationship to children, Baxter (2005) argues:

Toys and Children's playthings are a useful category of material culture to consider in an archaeological study of children and socialization. Toys carry meanings that relate to both the "imperial practices of adults" and the "native practices of children," and in most cultural settings they are used exclusively or primarily by children. (p. 41)

In the case of girl's toys, Baxter (2005) found dolls and tea party sets, for example, were given to girls so they can learn household skills such as sewing, taking care of babies and hosting a party. In this research, however, this sort of 'girls' toy was not shown in the blog entries. Instead of dolls, tea sets and plush toys, the two girls' rooms were decorated with learning posters and shelves of books, and the toys mentioned in the blogs are mainly educational toys such as puzzles. It is fair to say that the most obvious expectation of boys and girls revealed in this research is their (future) academic achievement, and this aspiration is shown by the fathers' emphasis on education. In the first part of this section, I reveal the fathers' emphasis on education by describing the educational materials presented in their blogs. In the second part, I discuss the cultural background which may have led to this emphasis. In the third part, I discuss the allocation of education. As I mentioned earlier, girls traditionally receive a smaller share of the educational investment in Han families, but this was not the case in this research. I then discuss the factors which are changing the allocation of education in the modern Taiwanese family.

### 6.4.1 Educational Materials

In the three blogs, a shared theme is educational materials. Dylan's father mentioned that he started to play prenatal education CDs to Dylan during the pregnancy; Ruby's father also recorded the same action. In addition to the so-called 'prenatal education' products, many activities in their daily life were also referred to as prenatal education:

We paid a visit to the local library today. [...] As mummy is pregnant, of course she is reading mummy and baby magazines. [...] My girl, is this an alternative way to prenatal education success?

In addition to this example, going to a concert, listening to music, even coming across a musician in the street were all recorded as prenatal education by Daddy Tom. He took the opportunity to prove that his prenatal education was useful and effective, although in some instances it seemed to be wishful thinking on the father's part:

[right after Ruby was born] Auntie nurse washed you clean and carried you out for grandpa, grandma, nanny [mother's side], uncle and daddy to see you. This is the very first time you were photographed and you already knew how to put on a duck face [to pout]. It proves our prenatal education was effective.

After the child was born, the value attached to education could be seen in the large number of educational materials that were acquired and way the child's room was decorated. From the posted pictures of their rooms, we can see that they are very similar and filled with almost the same objects: both Rosie's and Ruby's rooms have a soft pad on the floor, and the walls of both rooms are decorated with educational posters (ABC and times tables) and, in Rosie's room, shelves of book sets.



*Figure 3: A photograph of Rosie's room.*



*Figure 4: A photograph of Ruby's room.*

The content of these materials ranges from physical training (for example, both Ruby and Rosie were recorded as having ‘black and white’ books in the sets of materials designed to train their vision at around 3 or 4 months old) to language ability. Daddy Tom introduced the set he bought:

This five senses game box (10 books in this set) can promote children’s visual, cognitive, language, physical movement and thinking abilities. The age of 0 to 3 is the key period of a baby’s visual development. According to education experts, systematic training can bring out the child’s observation, imaginative, discerning, and logical thinking skills. By doing so, it not only lays a good foundation for learning, but also enhances the child’s sense of security and social adaptability.

From the above extract, we can see that he espoused the idea that early education is essential. He claimed the stated functions of the set as being “according to education experts”, but did not give the actual source. These descriptions may be quoted from the manual of the product or may be his own knowledge, and we can see that both the ideas of *yang* (to rear, grow) and *yu* (to nurture, educate) were mentioned, and were all categorised as ‘education’. The targets -- cognitive, language and physical movement abilities -- all resonated with the official language which defines the normal child, as described in Chapter 5. In addition, the phrase ‘lays a good foundation for learning’ was linked to future academic success, and Daddy Tom also mentioned social adaptability. The target of the education was thus not only to rear a healthy, normal individual, but also someone who would have academic success and be able to adapt to the society.

Dylan’s father also showed his view of the importance of early education. In his early diary, he once stated: ‘I conducted early education with Dylan for seven months’. From the entries, I found that Dylan’s father did not use any sets of materials, but instead used various types of CD that covered various topics ranging from English, mathematics and music to moral education. He recorded (this was before the diagnosis):

When he was 5 months old, my wife won a set of Disney English learning materials in a prize draw. [...] He started to



receive English education using this set when he was six months old.

In fact, he is very busy all day long. Apart from sleeping, there are adults teaching him most of the time; other than that, we play CDs on different topics to keep him company: English teaching, The Three-Character Classic (traditional moral education material), The Twenty Four Stories About Filial Obedience CD, times tables, nursery rhymes and classical music.

If we compare Dylan's materials with Rosie's and Ruby's commercial set of materials, we can see that Dylan's father's description of education is closer to the idea of *yu*: to nurture and to educate. The education materials mentioned by the three fathers share the feature of being academic-related, in that all include subjects such as mathematics and English. However, the sets of materials that Ruby's and Rosie's fathers bought include more content related to (medical) development, something which is absent from Dylan's materials. Instead, Dylan's materials included moral education CDs such as The Twenty-Four Stories About Filial Obedience CD and the Three-Character Classic. This difference could also be seen as the 'traditional' vs the 'scientific' way of raising a child. The former emphasises the social role of the child and the latter also emphasises the medical view of the normal child.

Further, 'play' and toys were also given an educational meaning by Daddy Tom and Rosie-pa. When Ruby was four months old, they bought her a mat, and he recorded:

Every morning, Ruby does exercises on her playing mat. The playing mat is a really good thing: it develops children's potential in play.

Later when Ruby turned one, the birthday present was a language learning table:

For a one-year old baby, the most important developments are speaking and walking; we (dad and mum) selected this special present just for you. This language learning table builds in forty songs and has items for you to learn colours, shapes, numbers and ABC. It can also pronounce some short words and sentences in both Chinese and English. We hope you can learn something while playing with it.

Similarly, when Rosie-pa is introducing the playgroup he formed, he says:

A playgroup is the idea of early education put into practice. Our group was formed by several families with similar aged children. We adopted interesting playgroup lessons which enhance the child's sensory integration. Within an atmosphere of encouragement and happiness, we developed the young children's spirit of discovery, confidence and positive learning.

It is difficult to see from the blogs how these materials were actually used in practice, however. For instance, it is unclear whether or not the parents followed all the suggestions contained in the sets, and I could not find enough evidence to affirm whether the parents' attitude was pushing or playful, but the investment seems to have been a continuous process. While Dylan's father later turned his focus onto Dylan's disability and Rosie-pa's later entries are mainly about their playgroup, Daddy Tom mentioned his investments quite regularly; for example, every birthday present he mentioned is educational. On Ruby's third birthday, he recorded his selection of her birthday present:

You love to learn from very young age, you are always taking a book and asking an adult to read it for you. All the elders in the family tell us to plan your education and think you will have a bright future. [...] In the coming year, we will buy more education materials and book sets. We will not leave a blank in the coming year.

He recognised the importance of (early) education and linked it to a bright future. His comment that 'we will not leave a blank in the coming year' also suggests that Ruby's baby and toddler life might have been a bit full. This is similar to scholars' findings about American families that, in a competitive society, being busy is seen as a sign of success (Darrah, Freeman, & English-Lueck, 2007). The subject of competition is discussed in Section 6.5. In this section, having revealed the fathers' emphasis on education, the discussion now moves to the possible reasons for this.

### 6.4.2 Why Education?

In this research, although the fathers' emphasis on education was clearly shown in their blogs, their reasons were not clearly stated. Why did the fathers present their view of the importance of education in public? As shown in Chapter 2, most fathers who receive the award of 'model father' are those who fit traditional gender roles. The roles designated for the father are those of the authority figure and head of the family; someone who works hard (not at housework but at paid jobs) and brings up 'successful' child(ren) (Chao, 2011b). It was pointed out in Chapter 4 that child caring is thought to be (and was found to be so in this research) the responsibility of the female members of the family; however, as shown above, if a child is successful in the future, the credit goes to the father and can be seen as evidence that the successful child's father is a good father. This seems contradictory; however, the different concepts of *yang* and *yu* introduced in the introduction to Chapter 5 and the traditional gender roles in the Taiwanese family provide an explanation for the apparent contradiction. In Section 6.4.1, I described Dylan's father's selection of educational materials, one of which was an audio book of traditional moral education material, The Three-Character Classic. This classic talks about the responsibilities of individuals in different positions in Han society; for example, it describes how a monarch should act and how a minister should act. In the part about parents, the phrase 養不教,父之過 (*yang bu jiao, fu zhi guo*) appears; this phrase means: if a child is only fed, but not taught, it will be the father's fault. Although 'raising' a child is in general thought to be the mother's responsibility, among the two concepts of *yang* and *yu*, the mothers' responsibility is closer to *yang* while fathers' responsibility is closer to *yu*. This idea also helps to clarify Dylan's father's reasons for taking on the job of the main carer, discussed in Chapter 4: he wrote that he gave up 'nurturing' Dylan and instead began to 'train' him (from being abnormal to being normal); what he was doing was closer to cultivating and educating than to feeding and growing. When he described his job as that of a multi-professional, he might have meant that what he was doing was not rearing, but educating. In this context,

the fathers' emphasis on and investments in educational materials demonstrate that they were being responsible, good (old) fathers.

However, it is still not clear why education is valued so highly in the blogs. Recent research into Han families in China and Taiwan has revealed that the two most distinguishing features of Han families are an emphasis on procreation and an emphasis on education (S. Lai, 2011). To explain the emphasis on education in Han families, a series of (Western) discussions around Amy Chua's concept of the 'Tiger Mother' has concluded that this is a Chinese (Han) cultural value. "Battle Hymn of the Tiger Mother" by Amy Chua was published in the U.S. in 2011 (and later in other countries). In this book, Chua introduced her strict, competitive and achievement-directed parenting strategies: minimal leisure time for children, valuing academic achievements and condemning any grades less than excellent, and long hours of practice of classical instruments (in her daughters' cases, piano and violin) (Chua, 2011). Although she was born and raised in the U.S., she claimed that her method of child rearing represents traditional Chinese (Han) cultural values. While American children have also been found to be busy (Darrah et al., 2007) and to participate in competitive activities (Friedman, 2013), Chua's high-handed method of child rearing soon attracted a lot of attention (e.g., Kohler, Kilgo & Christensen, 2012) and was referred as 'Tiger Mama Syndrome' or even 'Chinese Syndrome'. Subsequent discussion of the book supported the notion that this 'syndrome' might be closely related to 'Chinese (Han)' culture. For example, comparing Chinese (Han) students and Western students' academic achievements, both Ritchie (2011) and Lui and Rollock (2013) stated that teachers find that American-Chinese and British-Chinese children have high academic (as well as musical) achievement (Lui & Rollock, 2013; M. Ritchie, 2011). Ritchie mentioned that as a result of their culture, British-Chinese parents do not like to lose face, and thus invest more in their children's education and music learning than parents of other culture background. Lui and Rollock (2013) suggested that it is a result of the influence of Confucianism, which places a high value on academic achievement and sees it as a means of achieving future economic security and social mobility.

The cultural influence was also evident to some extent in this research. Although it is not clearly shown in Ruby's and Rosie's blogs, concern about losing face does appear in Dylan's father's writing. In the stories about making tea with Dylan recounted in Chapter 5, I mentioned that Dylan's grandfather felt he lost face when he took Dylan to his friends' tea making gathering. Dylan's father also recorded that he felt he made more efforts than other parents, but, because of Dylan's abnormality, the results were not what he had hoped for. Dylan's losing control in public always made him feel that he was losing face, and he worried that 'others will think I have not taught him'. This worrying also reveals that teaching the child was expected to be his responsibility. Lui and Rollock (2013) mentioned that, influenced by Confucianism, education and the child's future economic security and social mobility are linked with each other. However, the connotation of future economic security and social mobility in Taiwan is not limited to benefiting the individual (the child), but is closely related to the parents' future. The linkage is the concept of filial obedience.

In Han society, the traditional rule governing the interaction between parents and children is 孝 (*xiao*), which means filial obedience or filial piety. Research has found that parents of nursery school children still think that filial obedience is one of the necessary aspects of the education of a child's character (Huang, 2013; Jiang & Chen, 2008). Scholars have even argued that in Han people's society, filial obedience is not a virtue, but a necessity (Chou, 1998). Traditionally, the way to practise filial obedience is described negatively, quoting from one of the Confucian classics. Explained in modern language, there are three unfilial practices: disobeying one's parents; not being successful enough to support one's parents or failing to bring glory to the family (usually linked to academic achievement); and producing no descendants to continue the family. In other words, obeying one's parents and being able to support one's parents in the future is a basic requirement for descendants. In addition to this, the other two important tasks are to continue the family line and to bring glory to the family (Chou, 1998; Su, 1922).

Although research has suggested that practices in recent years might not be as strict as before (Chuang, 1985; Lee, 2007), the influence of the concept of filial obedience

in the current legal system. The clearest example is the fact that the obligation to take care of one's parents is listed in the Civic Code (Ministry of Justice, 2012a):

The following relatives are under a mutual obligation to maintain one another:

1. Lineal relatives by blood;
2. One of the husband and the wife [sic] and the parents of the other party living in the same household;
3. Brothers and sisters;
4. The head and the members of a house. (article 1114)

If a person who can no longer support his own living, if he has assumed the obligation of furnishing maintenance to another, he may be exempted from such an obligation, but his obligation could only be relieved if the person entitled to receive maintenance is the elder lineal relatives by blood or the spouse. (article 1118)

From the articles above, we can see that to live with the elder generation (usually the parents of the husband) is expected, and an individual is not exempt from the obligation to support the parents even if he or she can no longer support him or herself. A research study on the public image of elders as represented in television commercials found that living with the younger generations in the same household, having grandchildren at their side, and being served well by the younger generations (having filial descendants) is still the default image of a happy old age (Lien, 2012). In other words, the responsibility of taking care of the elders is thought to be that of the individual family, not the state. Although according to Lee (1998), filial obedience is thought to be better than the Western welfare system, the emphasis on filial obedience paradoxically delayed the state implementation of any welfare policy for elders in Taiwan. The most obvious example is that in the early 1990s, the then Premier of the Republic of China (the President of the Executive Yuan), Pei-tsun Hau, openly stated that he would not put any effort into the implementation of a welfare policy for elders as this is the responsibility of their descendants (W. Lin, 2012). Chu and Yu's (2010) research on Han families in China and Taiwan found that, owing to the lack (or limited provision) of a social security system, the

responsibility for maintaining the elders rests on individual families, and the linkages between generations are still strong. The finding of this research was that the concept of filial obedience still exists in the represented daily life of the father bloggers.

The concept of filial obedience in both China and Taiwan is represented by living with, or near to, the parents, so that it is easier to visit and take care of them. The three families in this research all showed similar arrangements. Dylan's family lives with his grandparents (in the same house but on a different floor). In Rosie's and Ruby's case, grandparents are common features in their online family albums. As shown in Chapter 4, their grandparents were the weekday carers of the children, and, from the entries, they seem to live at a daily reachable distance. This also means that they have the younger generation at their side.

Not only do the physical arrangements exhibit the character of filial obedience, the fathers' writings also reveal that they practise filial obedience themselves, and expect the child to be filial. In one of the entries about Dylan's father's decision not to take Dylan to be checked (when Dylan was one year old but had yet to speak), he recorded that it was because his own father (Dylan's grandfather) is a traditional Han physician and according to him the Western medical system is not trustworthy. Dylan's father therefore followed his father's instruction and delayed their consulting with the medical system. In Rosie's and Ruby's blogs, the interaction between the parents and grandparents is not clear, but the bloggers and the readers (of Rosie's blog) all show their expectation of the child being filial now and in the future. For example, Rosie-pa's readers more than once praised the blog, saying things like: (having been given such a good blog) Rosie should be grateful and understand that she should be filial in the future. Rosie-pa also said in a reply to his reader's comment that, after having Rosie, all his spending became Rosie-centred and he seldom spent money on himself, with the exception of camera equipment, which was for the purpose of taking beautiful pictures of Rosie. Finally, he wrote: 'Therefore, Rosie, you should show daddy your filial obedience after you grow up.' Daddy Tom used the words filial obedience to describe Ruby on various occasions even before Ruby was born (for example, being stable in the womb was described as filial obedience). When recording Mummy Jane's hard work breast-feeding, he wrote:

All these [efforts to breast feed after Mummy Jane had gone back to work] are for your immunity's sake, so be sure to make sure you show your mum filial obedience in the future.

On the same topic, in another paragraph, which is mainly addressed to Mummy Jane, he wrote:

I record your maternal love in my heart; if your daughter doesn't demonstrate filial obedience in the future, I will beat her for you to see. Ruby, are you reading this?

In an entry about Ruby making lunch boxes for Daddy Tom and Mummy Jane, Daddy Tom described the lunch box as 'a lunch box from a filial daughter'. These paragraphs all show the expectation of filial obedience and reveal the control and authoritative side of the parent-child relationship. We can also see that many different actions (even involuntary actions such as being stable in the womb) were described as filial obedience.

With regard to children, the requirements and expectations of filial obedience turn them into objects, not subjects, and a child is understood as the family's possession: a sort of tool owned by the family that will maintain, bring glory to, and continue the family line (Sun, 1990). In 2010, when the Ministry of the Interior of the ROC offered a reward of NT\$ 1,000,000 (around £20,000) for the person who could come up with the best slogan to 'change the atmosphere' and to encourage people to have children (the birth rate in Taiwan is one of the lowest in the world (CIA, 2011)), the winning slogan as voted by the public was: 'Children, our best heirloom', which again describes the child as 'a thing' to pass on, and to continue the family. This way of seeing the family and the child can be found in the blogs. For example, from the extract quoted in Chapter 4 in which Rosie-pa was arguing with his reader on the issue of his child and wife's rights of privacy, it is evident that he considered his children (and even his wife) as his possessions: this is MY family, thus you (his blog reader), who do not know me, do not have a say (on how I share my family lives online).

The fathers who wrote the blogs in this research never clearly state what the meaning (or practices) of filial obedience are in detail, but all these practices suggest that the



concept of filial obedience still has its place in these families. If we bring in the three negative factors which constitute filial obedience, we can see how the ‘Chinese (Han) culture’ mentioned by Western researchers overlaps with the concept of filial obedience: education is linked to future success and social mobility, which in turn is linked to supporting the parents, and bringing glory to the family; not wanting to lose face is also the other side of the coin to bringing glory to the family. Following this logic, the emphasis on education, which is strongly linked to future success, may have its roots in the concept of filial obedience. It will give the child a better chance of bringing glory to the family (and therefore securing the parents’ livelihood).

### **6.4.3 The Allocation of Educational Resources**

In the previous section, I have discussed how early education was valued by the fathers. However, if we put the gendered aspirations discussed in Section 6.3.3 into this picture, a question arises: why do the girls also receive the educational resources?

In order to continue the family line, boys, who will carry on the family name, are traditionally preferred in the Chinese Han family, even when the society is facing modernisation (Chuang, 1985). In a study on Han families in China and Taiwan, it was found that 40.51% respondents agreed that a family should have at least one boy to continue the family line (Chu & Yu, 2010). However, this does not mean that the daughter shares less responsibility for taking care of the parents. Instead, the responsibility is usually heavier: before (or when) the girl marries into another family, she is expected to give her parents money (or the equivalent in work) to show her gratitude for the fact that they brought her up; after the marriage, the wife is expected to demonstrate filial obedience towards her husband’s parents (see Civic Code in previous section) (S. Lai, 2011).

When there is more than one child in the family, the investment of education resources in Taiwan is not always equal between the genders. Mainly because the

family name will be carried on by the son, and the daughter is thought of as being a future member of another family, when resources are limited, they will go to the son (Xu & Yeung, 2013). When resources are limited, the daughter not only gets no resources, but is also expected to be a resource. In an earlier research, Greenhalgh (1985) found that, in the early stage of industrialisation in Taiwan, there were many cases where the eldest daughter was forced (or was even willing) to leave home to go to the city and factories to earn a living, not for herself, but for the family. A big portion of their salaries was sent back to the family, in the name of filial obedience (to show their gratitude to their parents for bringing them up). This money was usually used to support their brothers' education so that the family would have a better chance of gaining a better social position in the future (Greenhalgh, 1985). In this context, the idea of working women is quite different from the Western idea of leaving home and becoming financially independent. Research into Han families in China and Taiwan done by Chu and Yu (2010) found that this method of allocating the educational resources of the family, although it does not happen as frequently as before, still exists in Han societies, especially in Taiwan. When the family's economic situation makes it affordable, every child will have a share of the resources, but when the family is in difficulty and has to choose which child to invest in, the elder daughter is still the one who is sacrificed (Chu & Yu, 2010).

In this research, Dylan's family seemed to face the most economic pressure, but Dylan was the only child and he is a boy. On the other hand, there are no boys in Rosie's and Ruby's families, and the amount they spend on the systematic set of early education materials (and also considering the camera equipment the fathers use) suggests they have a sufficient family finances and do not have to make this kind of decision. When there is only one child, as in the case of Ruby, the value attached to education is more obvious. This is similar to the findings regarding single girls in Chinese families: as a result of the one child policy, if the child is a girl she now has sufficient support from the family and there are high expectations that she will be academically successful (Fong, 2002; Xu & Yeung, 2013). However, when we put the education investments and the concept of filial obedience together with the way Ruby's name was chosen and the comment about the prince on a white horse, it appears that these investments (on appearance and education) may have two

layers of meaning. The first is that these investments are not only for Ruby herself but also to ensure that the parents will be supported in their old age. The second layer is that, if Ruby can as a result do better academically and achieve a better social status, it will also give Ruby a better chance of being able to choose her husband from a group with a higher social status.

In this section, I have discussed the fathers' emphasis on education by showing their description of education and their investments in educational materials. Sets of so-called early education materials were bought and put to use. Psychological development, physical training, toys and play, were all included in their descriptions of early education. While this emphasis on education might be rooted in traditional Han cultural values such as filial obedience, the practices found in this research differ from the traditional investment in boys. When it was affordable, girls also received educational investment. While the partiality based on gender (in regard to the investment of education) was not found, considering the gendered aspiration discussed in previous section, investing in girls might also be to give girls a better chance of marrying someone with a higher social status.

## 6.5 Participating in Competitions

It was shown in Chapter 5 that these fathers recorded the child's health and medical progress in a competitive way (for example, they 'pursue' a certain standard), and this was no less the case when the topics related to things other than medical progress (e.g., length of hair, when the child walks and talks, early education). I should acknowledge that my method of choosing my target blogs – they are all competitive fathers as they have all been participants in various blog competitions – may have influenced this finding, but it is also true that the concept of competition is not alien to parents in Taiwan.

### 6.5.1 To Win at the Starting Point

There is a well known proverb in Taiwan which says, ‘do not let your child lose at the starting point’. Although it is difficult to trace its origin, this proverb is widely mentioned in various child-related situations. A search of the journal database in Taiwan National Central Library gave me more than 100 articles which feature this proverb in the title, and most of them are on child-related topics. For instance, the proverb is used to promote pre-school English teaching (Zhong, 2004), to highlight the importance of prenatal education (C. L. Lin & Tseng, 2004), and even to discuss neonatal vaccination (X. Su, 1997). The term ‘starting point’ in the sentence specifically refers to the starting point (starting line) of a race or competition. The questions that arise are: what is this race? and why are the parents so anxious about losing?

Chao’s (2011) research explored Taiwanese parental anxiety about children ‘losing at the starting point’. In her view, this is the result of the low birth rate in Taiwan and was also influenced by the child-centred family lifestyle that has existed in Europe since the eighteenth century. However, she does not explain how the European lifestyle came to influence Taiwanese society or what exactly that influence was. She then uses quantitative data to explore the relationship between the degree of parents’ anxiety and different parenting approaches (such as inter-communication, versatile child, tender solicitude and authority). The anxiety is clear, but it is difficult to be convinced by her reasoning regarding the cause of the anxiety. For example, a low birth rate would not necessarily make parents anxious about the possibility that their child might fail in some way. Even if we see life as a race against other people, a low birth rate means fewer competitors and a higher chance of winning. Equally, a child-centred lifestyle could lead to, for example, respecting the child’s wishes and recognising the child’s rights; it would not necessarily make parents anxious about losing.

In discussing the same type of parental anxiety, Lee (2007) borrowed the idea of helicopter parents to describe over-intervening and over-anxious Taiwanese parents.

The term ‘helicopter parents’ is used in the U.S. to refer to the kind of parents who, like a helicopter hovering above the child’s head, over-protect their children. The results suggest that this way of parenting does not assist the child’s development, as the child loses the opportunities to take risks and deal with things independently (Anonymous, 2014; Ungar, 2009). Although helicopter parents are usually seen as troublesome by school teachers, recent research has found that when school teachers and helicopter parents join forces, it may have a positive effect in enhancing the child’s academic achievements (Hiltz, 2015). I use the verb ‘borrow’ to describe Lee’s use of the term, because her version of helicopter parents appears to be different from that found in other literature. She sees the defining feature of helicopter parents as their anxiety that their children will lose at the starting point, rather than over-protectiveness. She describes the childrearing of (her version of) helicopter parents as a kind of extreme sport. The race starts in the very first year when they are busy taking the child to different classes, for example, training eye-hand coordination and balance, and later taking dancing lessons, swimming lessons, music lessons, and, of course, they pay a lot of attention to academic achievement. When appealing to parents not to be helicopter parents, Lee argued that over-anxiety may affect the parent-child relationship and the mental health of both the parent(s) and the child. To my understanding, the ideas of anxiety, over-protecting and valuing competitiveness – although they might overlap at points – are different from each other because over-protective parents may also, for example, want to protect their children from participating in competitions. I am therefore unwilling to describe parents who are anxious about losing at the starting point as helicopter parents. With regard to competitiveness, they are not so much helicopter parents, but are closer to the ‘tiger’ parents referred to above.

In a previous section, I discussed the ‘Tiger Mother’ and how cultural values do have an influence on the nurturing of a child. However, traditional culture may not be the only influential factor. As Williams (2011) pointed out:

It [the Tiger Mother’s way of raising a child] is not necessarily or even probably generated from Chua’s romanticized motherland. Our collective dilemma, and the most poignant challenge presented by her [the author, Amy

Chua's] book, is how to survive in a world where the slightest nonconformity risks landing you outside—of a home, of a job, of a life—and left to stand by yourself, alone in the freezing cold (P. J. Williams, 2011, p. 9).

In Williams' view, this sort of competitiveness is rooted in capitalism: it is not simply about being or not being filial: there is a survival game going on outside the family. In order to give a clearer picture of what the field of this survival game looks like in Taiwan, below I present a brief review of social-economic development in Taiwan.

An outline of the political background of Taiwan (ROC) was provided at the beginning of this chapter. After the ROC was driven out of mainland, the KMT government governed the country (Taiwan) by martial law. Economically, through taking over Japanese monopolies, receiving aid from the U.S. (1950-1965) and reducing the power of the existing landlords, the KMT government changed Taiwan from an agricultural to an industrial state (J. Liu, 2001). From the 1970s onwards, because of the so-called 'sinister international condition' (having been voted out of the UN), economic development was one the few means for the ROC to participate in the international community, and this participation was seen as being proof of the existence of ROC (under various names, such as Chinese Taipei or Taiwan). The values of 'being competitive' and 'depending on yourself' were widely propagated by the mass media and education. In recent years, owing to the small-scale domestic market and the contradictory and complex situation in foreign affairs (with the international society and China), the ROC government has failed to limit the degree of globalisation and has taken the route of neo-liberalism: economically, the government maintains economic growth by reducing the cost of production and cutting down on the provision of social welfare (Hsieh & Lin, 2014). As a result, the gap between the rich and the poor has been increasing over the years and social mobility seems less and less achievable (Hong, 2012; Lin, 2013). Educationally, the national education goal has been narrowed down to the discourse of competition (Huang & Ou, 2013).

In short, both the government, with its political, neo-liberalist economic development policy, and the education system in Taiwan share the values of 'being competitive'

and ‘depending on yourself’. Understanding the nature of private property and the inheritance system, members of society are well aware that the starting point will be different for each individual; since there is little provision of social welfare, ‘losing’ in the competition for success in education or other fields could have serious consequences, and so the reason why parents are anxious about their children ‘losing’ or being left behind in the ‘race’ becomes clear. Under the circumstances, it is unsurprising that ‘nurturing’ one’s child so that he or she will have a better chance of obtaining a good income in the future, or, in other words, equipping him or her with what it takes to be competitive, has generally become one of the main concerns of Taiwanese parents (Huang, 2012). Finally, if we bring the influential concept of filial obedience into this picture, losing is no longer just a personal thing, but could also mean making one’s parents lose face, failing to bring glory to the family, and being unable to support one’s parents in the future: that is, being unfilial. In order to secure the future of the family, with limited resources at hand, having fewer children to share these resources seems to be the most reasonable solution. This also means, however, that every child who has no brothers or sisters to share the future family responsibilities has all the pressure on his or her shoulders. There is no choice but for him or her to be ‘successful’. It is therefore highly possible that anxiety is rooted in Taiwanese development, capitalism and the concept of being filial. In the face of all this pressure, childhood is represented as a period of busily preparing: preparing for the ‘race’ to come.

### **6.5.2 Competition for Babies**

Not only is childhood represented as a period of preparing, there are competitions for babies to participate in. On closer examination, I found that the early education materials publisher mentioned in an earlier section, Little Bear, does more than sell the materials. On their website, they show users how to decorate the walls of the child’s room with various educational materials (the sample picture is very similar to Rosie’s and Ruby’s rooms), and the company’s website shares other users’

successful experiences via articles, photographs and video clips. The way of selling their products echoes the finding that among various marketing approaches, online marketing, which combines images and professional description, co-produces the cultural practice and ideals of (intensive) mothering (Fuentes & Brembeck, 2017). One recent video clip shows user parents how to use their materials to induce a 58 day-old baby to pronounce a particular sound (on the grounds that this is guaranteed to make him speak properly earlier). There is an entry about Rosie participating in a baby course in which she practised using her eyes to follow a moving object, and a crawling lesson is also mentioned at one point. After googling the name of the class, I found that it is run by the mother company of Little Bear and sold as a bundle with the set of early education materials. In this entry, Rosie-pa proudly recorded: ‘On the baby course Rosie gets first place in the class when doing eyesight chasing’.

This suggests that early education is no longer designed to prepare children for future competition – it has taken the form of getting them to practise competing. Not only early education, but also many child-related activities, are now run by commercial entities and take the form of competition. One popular competition for young children is a baby crawling competition. In the competition, babies are held at the starting point of a big mat by one carer, and another carer could have an item at the goal to attract the baby. On the mat, there will be various toys to distract the participants. The target for the participants is to crawl to the other end of the mat, and of course the first one to crawl across the goal line will be the winner. A search online revealed that this kind of competition is currently being held frequently by many local governments and various commercial entities in Taiwan (and also in Japan). I found from my data that both Rosie and Ruby had participated in local crawling competitions. According to Rosie-pa, he entered Rosie for the local competition three months before she could actually crawl in order to secure her place. This suggests that the crawling competitions were very popular, at least in the place where Rosie lived.



In Rosie's case, the competition she participated in was held by a chain baby clothes retailer, Les enfants, and the venue was the top floor of a local department store. The photographs her father took show four mats, with each one having five tracks (see Figure 5). According to his records, there are at least three heats on the day with four groups of babies in each heat. The winners of each group will have the chance to participate in the final to decide who is the overall winner of the day.



*Figure 5: The venue Rosie took her crawling competition.*

In a different city, Ruby was entered into two crawling competitions, one held by Les enfants and another by ToysRus. The venue for Ruby's first game was not as big as Rosie's but was also located in a local department store. There were also five tracks for each game (see Figure 6 on P.155) and at least four heats before the actual final. Not only did the babies participate in the game, a documentary photography competition (the theme is to capture the crawling competition) was also held at the same time for the parents and carers to enter. Daddy Tom mentioned they once took Ruby to see her cousin participate in a nappy moving competition: it is a competition for toddlers to see who can move the most packs of nappies from one area to another

in a given time. In short, there are various kinds of competition for young children to enter.



*Figure 6: The venue of one of Ruby's crawling competitions*

All the prizes for the competitions mentioned in the blogs were products of the organisers, and included things like mummy bags (a kind of bag with pockets for nappies and wipers and a bottle holder to help mothers organise their day out with a baby), toys or gift vouchers. The qualification to enter the competition – apart from an age limitation -- is also related to the organiser's business. For example, Ruby's father mentions:

I know that the prizes of ToysRus' competition are usually very good, but only their Star members can enter the game. After I phoned them and was told that I would have to apply for membership in person, we went to ToysRus that afternoon to apply for membership and, at the same time, enter Ruby for the crawling competition.

Although the whole competition scene seems to be driven by commercial entities, I found that it is still represented as or related to early education. For example, all the participants in the ToysRus game received a free set of toys. It is reasonable to suppose that this prize for participating is attractive enough to draw parents in so the organiser can share in this busy market. Being a toy retailer, ToysRus selected a set of early learning flash cards as the prize for participating the year Rosie took part in the competition.

Apart from the material prizes, Rosie-pa also recorded that taking part in the competition is a very good lesson for the baby. Although he did not mention what the lesson is, Friedman's (2013) research sheds light on this topic. In her book, "Playing to Win", she examined American primary children's participating in after-school competitive activities such as competitive dance, football (soccer) and chess. A similar anxiety about falling behind was found. Parents, based on their experiences and their understanding of the competitive society their children will face in the future, argued that to participate in these competitive activities may benefit their children. Friedman coined the term 'competitive kid capital' (p.17) to describe the key lessons children are thought (by their parents) to learn from these competitive activities, including: learning the importance of winning, learning to bounce back from a loss, performing within a time limit, succeeding in stressful situations, and performing under the gaze of others. The finding in this research was that the starting age for participating in competitive activities in Taiwan is as low as under one year old. I mentioned in Chapter 5 that research into mother's consumption (of infant food) has suggested that mother's consumption and consumption decisions, influenced by the ideology of intensive mothering, are based on their understanding of what is a good mother and what is good for their child. They try to provide a better choice for the child and, at the same time, prevent risks of the child being unhealthy (Afflerback et al., 2013; Cairns et al., 2013). While in Chapter Five, the risk to avoid was identified as being abnormal (delayed), in this chapter, the risk to avoid is falling behind in the (future) academic and economic competition. The product (sets of early education materials) has been expanded from materials to secure the child's development, to include various forms of competition for children to participate in, using the language of early education to justify them.

In this section, I have described the additional forces which shape early childhood. Together with the aspirations derived from traditional cultural gender aspirations and the emphasis on education, the social-economic conditions exacerbate the anxiety of parents, and increase the burdens on each child's shoulders. Life is seen as a competition for survival, and childhood as a period of equipping the individual with abilities that can be used in the later competitions. Taking advantage of parents' anxiety, commercial entities step in, masquerading as an opportunity for early education, organising various types of competition for children to experience at a very early age.

## 6.6 Conclusion

In this chapter, I have shown constructions of Taiwanese childhoods by discussing the fathers' nurturing activities. The child was described and dressed based on gender stereotypes and was 'educated' from a very early age. In addition to Han cultural values, living in a neo-liberal society where the efforts of an individual are seen as being of prime importance and where social welfare is lacking, parents worry that their children may lose at the starting point (and thus in the future). Combined with the traditional aspirations, the social-economic conditions exacerbate the anxiety of parents and increase the burden on each child's shoulders.

And as I discussed in previous chapters, when the fathers showed the investments they made for their children in public, although on the one hand this may serve the purpose of demonstrating that they are good fathers who care about their children's future and take responsibility for nurturing (educating) their children, on the other hand, it also reveals how they participate in the competition to nurture a competitive child. They not only spread the idea of the competitive society their children may face in the future, they also showed the present competition to their readers. Although everyone joins in this competition in different ways, if their readers (other parents) are not doing similar things, the reports could cause these other parents to feel a similar type of anxiety and encourage them also to start participating in the

competitions in order to make sure that their children also do not ‘lose at the starting point’. Having discussed my findings, in the next chapter, I conclude this research by answering my research questions and present the implications for the literature, policy and practice, and future research.

## Chapter 7 Conclusion

In previous chapters I have discussed Taiwanese fatherhood and childhood as they were displayed in three father-run baby blogs. In an era when the internet permeates our everyday lives, when parents share their parenting experiences and practices online, and when children are put online even before they leave the womb (Leaver, 2015a), this research suggests a way of seeing these public digital representations of parenthood (in this research, fatherhood) and childhood, as well as a way to understand these Taiwanese fathers' practices of blogging. In this final chapter, I first summarise the findings of this research by revisiting and answering my research questions. This is followed by a discussion of the implications of this research for literature, policy and practice, and future research, and finally, my afterthoughts.

### 7.1 Answering the Research Questions

Based on my experience of participating in the Taiwanese blogosphere, the questions that this raised in my mind, and the gaps identified in the related literature, the aim of this research was to explore how and in what ways early childhood and fatherhood are constructed in Taiwanese father-run baby blogs. This research was conducted by selecting three public Taiwanese father-run baby blogs and observing the entries up until the blogged child turned three years old. Understanding the complexity of blog contents, I referred to a variety of approaches to data analysis, and developed a method that was suitable for different forms of blog content to address the following research questions:

Research question 1: What are the roles of Taiwanese fathers displayed and/or expressed in these blogs? To what extent are they involved in the child raising? What factors are claimed or shown to be influential in constructing the expressed fatherhoods?

Research question 2: How does the interface and technology of the blog contribute to the fathers' fathering? How can we understand this 'new' doing (blogging) of fathering?

Research question 3: What concepts of Taiwanese childhood are shown in these baby blogs? How are these concepts expressed? What factors are claimed or shown to be influential in constructing the expressed childhoods?

My analysis and discussion were guided by these research questions. In Chapter 4, the discussion mainly addressed research questions 1 and 2. Research question 3 was answered in Chapters 5 and 6. In this section, I summarise the findings discussed in these three chapters by answering the research questions.

### **7.1.1 Research Question 1**

What are the roles of Taiwanese fathers displayed and/or expressed in these blogs? To what extent are they involved in the child raising? What factors are claimed or shown to be influential in constructing the displayed fatherhoods?

Being curious about what the public image of fatherhood is, this researcher examined the displayed fatherhood and divisions of labour and practices revealed in three blogs, and produced explanations for these found versions of fatherhood.

Rosie-pa and Daddy Tom's most obvious involvement found in this study was their efforts to be present, to take photographs and to blog. It seems that they both spent time on activities with the child and also participated in outings with the family. Compared with the public image of fathers revealed in a recent survey (The Child Welfare League Foundation, 2013) that suggested Taiwanese fathers seldom participate in family life and usually work until late, this suggests that the two fathers were leaning towards the 'new good father' end of the spectrum. It also suggests that both fathers might be facing less economic pressure so that they did not have to work late. However, from the daily life displayed in their blog entries, it is evident that

they were not usually the main carers of their children, and child caring was shared mainly between the female members: mothers and grandmothers in both families in the studied period. Even when fathers were involved in certain parts of the parenting work, such as recording, those were usually the less demanding aspects. This finding shows that the Taiwanese father's involvement in child caring has changed little over the past twenty years (see Mo, 1997; Wang & Yu, 1997).

Dylan's father's case, on the other hand, provides an interesting example of fatherhood in the process of changing. He began his fatherhood journey from the old good father's end of the spectrum, and ended up passing the new good father's end: he took on the role of the main carer. In this process, the pressure he faced, according to his account, is in line with Livesay's (2011) finding that suggested Stay-at-home Fathers have to wrestle with the traditional expectations for men to be the breadwinners, and face the social pressure that accuses them of not doing 'manly chores' but 'womanly chores' (Livesay, 2011). While the concept of Stay-at-home Fathers provided a new image of fatherhood, however, from the reasons Dylan's father gave for taking on this role, we can see that the driving force behind the change was not a new idea of a good father, but the family's economic situation and the old version of a good father which emphasises the strength of men. Only when the 'mission' is not seen as a daily routine but as a form of professionalism is it appropriate for a father to take on the job of caring for the child. If we further apply the concept discussed in Chapter 6 that traditionally it is the father's responsibility to arrange the child's education, we may see that although Dylan's father presents a public image of a new good father who takes on the role of child carer, the ideal father constructed in his blog is still the old good father.

If we put the three cases together, we can see that, although some new ways of doing fatherhood, such as blogging and more participation, had started to emerge, the old version of a good father was still having a stronger influence on the fatherhoods in this research.



## 7.1.2 Research Question 2

How does the interface and technology of the blog contribute to the fathers' fathering? How can we understand this 'new' doing (blogging) of fathering?

Following the approach of 'doing parenthood', which argues that motherhood and fatherhood are generated from daily practice, such as child care, and is the process of reproducing socially defined mothers and fathers (Coltrane, 1989; Fox, 2009; West & Zimmerman, 2009), this research sees blogging as a new component of 'doing fatherhood'. In the current research, the three fathers' methods of blogging were analysed, and the meaning of this new component of doing fatherhood has been discussed.

With regard to the fathers' usage of the blog, as revealed in Chapter 4, these fathers did take advantage of the technology to organise their multi-media fathering records. However, the three blogs in this research seldom established links with other fathering websites or parenting resources. Dylan's blog did not attract other parents with autistic children to support each other or to exchange information. Daddy Tom even made the comment function private in Ruby's blog. We can see that the interface and technology of the blog provided the tool for the fathers to record and to publish, but the interactive nature of blogs (Bruns & Jacobs, 2006; Webb & Lee, 2011) was not obvious in their case. The linkage with other websites or blogs is also a rare feature in Rosie's blog; however, many more interactions happened in the blog. An examination of the development of the blog reveals that the internet helped Rosie-pa to cross his original social relationship (not geographic) boundaries and to meet other off-line families. The new off-line relationships enriched the online space and made his blog an interactive platform for their off-line playgroup. The case of Rosie's blog thus provides us with a good example of how on/off-line lives and communities are not two separate things, but are interwoven in various ways (Hine, 2015b). With regard to the meaning of this doing of fathering (blogging), I referred in Chapter 4 to the concept of displaying family (Finch, 2007) to discuss their

claimed purposes in starting the blogs: for their children to read in the future.

Through displaying their family lives online in public, the family relationship can be confirmed by the readers as well as by their family members, including their children in the future.

From the above, it appears that there is nothing new about the fatherhood represented in these blogs. However, over the years of blog entries, the new component of ‘doing fatherhood’, blogging, seems to have been under construction. Their blogs were liked (similar to the function in Facebook), one of them came first in the blog awards, another was reported by an online magazine, and the quality of photographs was praised. In Rosie-pa’s case, after he left Rosie alone and bored at her birthday party, by producing a blog entry that featured a large number of photographs of all the participants, the venue and the left alone Rosie, he was praised by his reader (a mother) saying: “Rosie’s so lucky. Having you to record for her. It is like having two mummies”. Rosie-pa posted more high-definition photographs in later entries than in earlier entries, and, when I collected my data, he was offering a service of taking babies’ photographs in his blog. This is also true of Ruby’s blog, in which the first year’s diaries, although photographs were featured, was mainly kept in words, while the diaries for the second two years featured more photographs than words.

To summarise, we may say that the internet and the blog provide a new means for displaying family. At the same time, however, this new way of displaying, in line with Leaver’s (2015) argument, normalised the doing (blogging) itself, and the culture that parents have the rights to survey their children in certain ways. One way of ‘doing’ this new component of ‘doing fatherhood’, blogging, consists of taking more pictures and sharing the child’s daily life and personal information online.

### 7.1.3 Research Question 3

What concepts of Taiwanese childhood are shown in these baby blogs? How are these concepts expressed? What factors are claimed or shown to be influential in constructing the displayed childhoods?

Since ‘the child’ in this research is the child that has been expressed and displayed in a blog and the agency is on the adult’s side, I discussed the childhood found in this research from the perspective of the father: their displayed and revealed ways of raising their children.

In Chapter 5 I started by showing the fathers’ professional-like descriptions and recordings of their children’s development. These descriptions and recordings are based on scientific knowledge, including the physiology and developmental psychology of the child. Scientific knowledge has set standards that define which child is normal (who reaches the milestones in time) and which child is not (who is delayed). After identifying the decisive power of the medically defined normal child, I examined how the (medical) normal child is constructed in Taiwanese society. The legal system, medical knowledge, interpretations and practices work together to produce the concept of a ‘normal’ child. The fathers in this research all showed acceptance of this concept of the medical normal child and employed similar concepts and terms to describe their own children and those of other parents; they made great efforts to pursue, or even make sure that their child surpassed the standard levels and to compare their children with others. To prevent or reduce the risk of being defined as delayed, the state-set standards were not seen as the only useful criteria: other information was referenced and commercial forces also stepped in.

This finding echoes Wyness's (2012) discussion on the powerful influence of developmental psychology, because it “plausibly accounts for the fixed biological nature of childhood, making it difficult for us to view childhood any differently” (p.

20-21). In this study, the displayed childhoods of the three different children were similar to each other. And in the case of Rosie, who has two younger sisters, I could identify no obvious differences between Rosie and her sisters either. Dylan's case does provide a different example of a child's character, and the interactions between father and child were recorded in more detail. However, these differences were not simply described as being the result of Dylan's character, but as a result of Dylan being different from a normal child. From the stories Dylan's father told, we can see that the medical diagnosis affected Dylan's father's understanding of the same activity: the tea making introduced in Chapter 5. The case of an 'abnormal' child thus reveals the less visible power of the institutional and social views of what constitutes normality even more clearly than the cases of normal children. It is powerful enough to overturn an individual's initial narrative.

In Chapter 6, I turned my focus onto the social and cultural factors in Taiwan that I found influenced the displayed childhood. I discussed these in three parts: gender, education and competition. It was found that the children were raised differently depending on their biological sex. While the imagined future of boys included occupations such as inventor or scientist, a girl's happiness was thought to be linked to a getting a good husband. However, little difference was found between boys and girls when it came to education and competition. I argued that the cultural background to this emphasis on education may be rooted in the value of filial obedience: its purpose is so that the child will bring glory to the family in the future. In order to achieve this, childhood is turned into a period of preparation. Children are to be educated so that they can have better academic achievement in the future, which is also linked to economic security for the child and the parents in the future. Leading on from the discussion on the issues of competition, my data show that childhood is not only a period of preparation, but also already a competitive battlefield. To discuss this issue further, I brought in the Taiwanese political and social-economic background to explain the anxiety about losing shown by the fathers. I also have shown that, in line with research findings on mothers' consumption (Afflerback et al., 2013; Cairns et al., 2013), commercial entities had also joined in the construction of this competitive childhood. Taking advantage of the parents' anxiety about their child losing, they sell products to 'help' the parents to

avoid the risks of having the child 'lose' in the future, and organise various types of competition for children to experience at a very early age.

Although for the purpose of discussion, I separated the concept of raising (養育) into rearing and nurturing, the concept, in the same way as it is a co-verb, is mixed in daily practice. Putting these findings together, we can see that childhood in Taiwan is displayed as a series of competitions: basically, a child is compared with medically defined normality and its development is also compared with that of other children. If you do not meet the minimum requirement, like Dylan, you will be defined as abnormal and disqualified from taking part in future competitions. After the basic requirement of being normal has been met, a child is then educated and taken to participate in various competitions. This childhood is constructed by the legal system, the social-cultural system, and the practices surrounding them. As this childhood is now displayed on the internet, in an age when 70 per cent of new generation Taiwanese parents use the internet as the main resource to find child-raising information (Les enphants, 2016), this public image of childhood contributes to the construction of this childhood.

## **7.2 Implications for the Literature, Policy and Practice, and Future Research**

### **7.2.1 Implication for the Literature**

#### **Taiwanese Fatherhood**

The findings of this research contribute to the study of Taiwanese (new) fatherhood in two ways: the understanding of the role of the father in the process of change, and the new doing of fathering: blogging. Since the concept of gender equality emerged and more mothers are doing paid jobs outside the household, in recent decades, Western researchers have argued that the expectations and duties attached to fathers

have been undergoing a multi-dimensional change (Collier, 2001; Knijn, 1994), and this is also the case in Taiwan. In Taiwan, while this change is going on, two contradictory versions of the public image of the ‘good father’ exist at the same time. An ‘old good father’, who is the head of the family, who works hard and brings up ‘successful’ children is praised by the state (Chao, 2011b), while at the same time, a ‘new good father’, who shares household and child-caring responsibilities has also emerged (Chao, 2011b; Hsu, 2005; Mo, 1997). In this thesis, different versions of fatherhood have been presented that suggest that the old version of a good father was still having a stronger influence on the displayed fatherhoods. These findings help to give us a deeper understanding of the change that is taking place in fatherhood in Taiwan.

Seeing fatherhood as a series of negotiations with motherhood, with the social constructions outside the household, and with the fathers’ paid jobs (Connell, 2011), the labour divisions revealed in this research also contribute to the understanding of this negotiation. Through the cases presented in this thesis, we can see that in a child-related scene, the fathers’ roles, apart from blogging afterwards, were to organise, to plan and to oversee, while mothers were the ones who actually implemented those plans. This kind of division of labour was also revealed elsewhere: for instance, it was the father who bought dresses for the girl, but it was usually the mother’s work to dress her. This power relationship is clearer in the example I gave in Chapter 5. While Daddy Tom and Mummy Jane made the decision to feed Ruby with her mother’s breast milk after Mummy Jane went back to her day job, the decision was phrased as the father’s decision. However, it is clear that this decision could only be put into practice by the mother. The argument of Western researchers that in the divisions of labour between mothers and fathers, mothers play the ‘leading’ role and fathers play the ‘supporting’ role (Sanchez & Thomson, 1997; S. Williams, 2008) may therefore need to be rephrased to describe what the findings of this research suggest. Although on the surface the results seem similar, the leader-supporter relationship is different. We may say that the displayed role of the fathers is that of project (of child raising) director who oversees the project, and the mother’s role is that of project manager who has to get the project done.

## Online Fatherhood

This thesis also contributes to the limited literature on online fatherhood. Recent research into fatherhood on the internet has suggested that because hands-on fathers are the minority in the society, they do not have role models to follow and face traditional gendered pressure. In the process of learning to be a new kind of father, they use the internet to find support and to confirm this new way of doing fatherhood (Åsenhed et al., 2014; Cole & Renegar, 2016). I have shown that Dylan's father faced similar pressure, but that there was no support being offered in the blog. In Rosie-pa and Daddy Tom's case, as discussed in the answer to research question 1, because the fatherhood represented by them is still closer to the old good father's end of the spectrum, they did not seem to face the same anxiety as new (hands-on or stay-at-home) fathers regarding the lack of a role model to follow. Overall, the internet's function of creating and strengthening the identity of new fathers found in the literature (Åsenhed et al., 2014; Cole & Renegar, 2016) was not obvious in this research.

What was obvious in these blogs is that the fathers' blogging also constructed a parenthood that is similar to the intensive mothering described by Hays (1996): putting the child at the centre of the stories told and showing their investment in the child. Recent research into motherhood on the internet (Arnold, 2011, 2016; Craig, 2016; Goriss-Hunter, 2016; Loe, Cumpstone & Miller, 2016; Orton-Johnson, 2016; Valtchanov, Parry & Glover, 2016) has suggested that mothers also face the pressure of being a good mother in the online environment, and this 'good mother' is still close to the ideology of intensive mothering. Of course, if the ideas of what is good parenting and what is good for the child have not changed, this new way of doing fatherhood could inherit the pressure mothers used to face. Acknowledging the changes in the father's role, scholars (Palladino, 2014; Smyth & Craig, 2017) have coined the terms intensive fathering and intensive parenting to discuss this situation that many fathers may face.

However, because the fatherhood displayed in these blogs is the version of the old good father, and he plays the role of project (of child raising) director, the constructed intensive parenting, although performed by the fathers, is not intensive fathering, but intensive mothering. In this sense, the fathers' blogging can also be understood as a form of supervision report.

## **Taiwanese Childhood**

As mentioned in the literature review in Chapter 2, very little research has been carried out into how the conception of childhood is socially constructed in Taiwan. From the pictures of ideal children drawn in the public texts (Q. Chen, 2006; W. Chen, 2014; Wu, 2009), the child appears to be seen as 'becoming'; an ideal child is one who acts less childishly than others (being calm and mature) and shows his/her willingness to change the situation of being ignorant (diligence and an enthusiasm for learning), and this image appears to have changed little in the last fifty years. The versions of childhood found in this research echo this traditional version: the way a child is seen as just an incomplete adult was performed in the detailed records of development and the emphasis on education. This research contributes to our understanding of the social construction of this childhood by discussing the legal system, the practices and the cultural concept of filial obedience.

This thesis also contributes to the literature on the competitive child. Scholars have suggested that because being busy is seen as a sign of success in a competitive society, children in this kind of society have been made busy (learning different things) by their parents (Darrah et al., 2007). Friedman's (2013) research has shown that American children are taken to participate in competitive activities at primary school age. In her view, this arrangement is not designed so that the child can learn the skills of dancing, sports or chess, so that they can take these up as their occupations in the future. Rather, it is so that the child can learn the meaning of, and the abilities needed to take part in the competitive society. Friedman coined the term 'competitive kid capital' to describe the key lessons children are thought (by their



parents) to learn from these competitive activities, including learning the importance of winning, being able to bounce back from a loss, to perform within a time limit, to succeed in stressful situations, and to perform under the gaze of others (p.17). The findings of the current research show that the starting age for participating in competitions in Taiwan is even earlier than primary school. Not only is the age lower, but also the range of the competition is wider: even physical development (crawling) is included in the competition.

## 7.2.2 Implications for Policy and Practice

As I pointed out in Chapter 3, in the process of doing this research, the recorded child's right of privacy was always an issue for me. I was nervous and uneasy not only when I considered my methods of displaying the data, but also when I read some of the data, for instance, the very detailed description and high-definition photographs of Rosie-ma giving birth to her children published by Rosie-pa. For the obvious reason, the child's agreement to the sharing of these pieces of information is absent. In the case that I mentioned in Chapter 4, when Rosie-pa replied to a reminder about the child's and the mother's privacy, his approach to replying – discussing nothing about the right of privacy but claiming that 'this is *my* family' – presents an example of how this issue is approached in Taiwan.

Although the latest Protection of Children and Youths Welfare and Rights Act in Taiwan introduced the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) into Taiwan, and the right of privacy of the child is included in this act, the idea of children's right of privacy is still new to Taiwanese society and is seldom discussed. For example, in an article that reviewed the recent one hundred year's legal and policy development of children and youth welfare in the ROC (Feng, Li, & Xie, 2011), the right of privacy was not mentioned. A search of the database in Taiwan National Library using 'child, privacy', 'children's right of privacy', and 'right of privacy of the child' as key words and/or title, returned zero results. I would also like to point out that, as I have introduced in Chapter 6, the ROC is not a

member of the UN, thus she does not even qualify to sign the UNCRC. Reduced to daily practice, as discussed in Chapter 3, under the legal framework in Taiwan (Civil Code), any individual under the age of seven “shall be represented by his guardian for making or receiving and expression of intent” (Ministry of Justice, 2012b). In other words, parents are supposed to be the last line of defence of their children’s privacy. For the parents to include their children in the blog is therefore legally acceptable. But this sharing of the child online is more complex than that.

I am not suggesting that this kind of sharing online is an action of all evil but I do see the necessity of discussing this topic further. As Leaver (2015) has pointed out, the social aspect of the sharing of the child online is often about sharing the joy and excitement about the new life. This thesis also shows that the sharing is about building memory and confirming relationship with the child in the future.

Considering the child was born digital and will be entering a digital future, there are parents who intentionally build and shape this digital legacy for their children (CECILYK, 2012). On the other hand, however, these intentions may turn into something else when they are happening on the internet. For instance, because this sharing puts the child’s information and images out in public and in the hands of the service provider, it also gives this sharing a media side on which the data is stored and, in many cases, sold by the service provider (Leaver, 2015a). As various services on the internet, tools of sharing, and the ways of sharing are all in the process of development, I agree with Leaver (2015) who urged the necessity for new discussions and new understandings of this phenomenon. And in the case of Taiwan, not only the parents’ sharing of their children online, but also the idea of rights of privacy need further discussion.

### **7.2.3 Implications for Future Research**

In the process of doing this research, some questions were raised; however, owing to the method and the aim of this research, these questions were left unanswered.

The first question involves, again, the recorded child. In this research, the agency is on the father's side, and the child is the object being recorded and represented. If we see children as social actors (Thorne, 1993), it is natural to be curious about what the recorded children feel, think and experience with regard to being blogged. It would also be interesting to examine the children's own ways, if any, of participating on the internet. In Chapter 2, I reviewed some research into older children's ways of participating on the internet. Unlike these older children, however, the recorded children in this research might face a different challenge when they grow up, at the very least, because there is a version of them, created by their fathers, already on the internet.

There is an example of this in the fourth blog which I later excluded from this research. It is an entry posted after the blogged child (the first son in the family) returned home from his first day at primary school. In this entry, the blogger mentioned that his son's teacher had said to his son, 'Ah, I know you from your birth, I am a reader of *your* blog'. This example, although not carefully studied, suggests that this online version of the recorded child might also have an impact on his or her off-line life. A study that focuses on the experience of once blogged (or shared online in other ways) children would increase our understanding of the parents' sharing, and also of the children and childhood on the internet.

The second question concerns filial obedience. In Chapter 6, I applied the concept of filial obedience to discuss the fathers' emphasis on education. Although the following discussion may not be directly related to this research, in the study of this concept during this project, I found the concept of filial obedience might have a broader influence in Taiwanese society.

The effect of the concept of filial obedience on gender issues is not only represented in the preference for boys and the sacrifice of girls, as I mentioned in Chapter 6, recent news has also revealed that in the name of filial obedience, gender roles are not to be challenged. Since 2012, there has been a series of proposals to amend the section on family in the Civic Code, especially in the section dealing with the legal recognition of same sex marriages in Taiwan. Unlike Christian (and Muslim) societies that are usually against same sex marriages for religious reasons, in Taiwan

to recognise same sex marriages (for them to form a legal family) is seen by the opponents of same sex marriages as a force that will destroy the family. The question arises: how would allowing more people to form a family destroy the family? It seems contradictory, but if we see the 'family' as a 'clan' and take into account the concept of filial obedience, it becomes understandable. The opponents of same sex marriages have formed various advocacy groups in the last few years, all in the name of protecting the family and or protecting the child. In order to rescue the child from the wrong (in their language), in addition to demonstrating against the legalisation in the capital city of Taipei when the legalisation process was going through inside the parliament, they also participated in the public hearings for the Gender Equity Education Act, which was adopted in 2004, in other cities. In their view, there is no such thing as sexism and anything concerning Lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) issues should not be taught in school. They argued that, naturally, there are only two different sexes in the world, and we should teach a child that boys and girls are different in nature. They warned people that, by acknowledging that individuals of different sexes may not be attached to a certain gendered character, this Act would make boys not like boys, girls not like girls, and would turn them into gays and lesbians (S. Liu, 2016). Their debates with same sex marriage supporters reveal that their objections might be rooted in the concept of filial obedience. They argued that same sex marriage makes it impossible to record genealogy. For people who value filial obedience, same sex marriage goes against traditional ethics, it will destroy the family, and thus it is unacceptable (Y. Lai, 2013). It is also quite common for people who are opposed to same sex marriage to claim that it is not real marriage because the couple are unable to have children naturally (The Initium, 2016).

In short, in order to fulfil the requirements of filial obedience, it is necessary to continue the family line; in order to continue the family line, it is necessary for a couple to be able to have children together naturally, and gender roles, even gender characteristics, are natural and unchallengeable. The above discussion is based on the limited number of related documents I encountered during my research and is thus not a proper finding. However, I would suggest that it would be an interesting research topic to take the concept of filial obedience as an analytic tool to analyse other social phenomena in Taiwan.

### 7.3 Afterthoughts

Being an idealist, I was somewhat disappointed in the findings of this research. As I stated in Chapter 1, the starting point for this research was my personal child-raising and blogging experiences. There was a time when I also expected that the blog, which provides more people with the opportunity to make their voices heard, may bring various experiences and views into the public sphere and even challenge the norm of the child and the father. This is not, however, what I found in this research.

Nevertheless, I do not see these findings as the end of the line. From the time these entries were blogged to date, and again, from the time this research was designed to date, the development of technology and the internet has continued; various new services, hardware (e.g., the smartphone), and ways of using the internet have been introduced, and the recorded children have grown. If we take Dylan as an example, from the data presented in previous chapters, we might see Dylan's father's lament and his attitude towards the disability (an incurable disease), and his concerted efforts, using forceful means (for example, scolding), to normalise Dylan as completely negative. Other research into parents' experience of raising a disabled child has suggested that parents are not always negative, however. They may be tired, but not exactly sad (Green, 2007); they may be in shock and brought down when they are informed of the diagnosis, but later they may turn into positive and active managers of the situation (Beresford, 1994; Shih, 2012). This does appear in later entries in Dylan's blog. At the time I am writing this paragraph, Dylan is a high school student, and the blog shows that Dylan's father now has a positive attitude towards the disability and towards Dylan. It is thus highly possible that because my data collection stopped when the child turned three, and Dylan was diagnosed at the age of two and a half, that the information I included in this study was full of the early negative reactions after the shock of diagnosis. Of course, without making a proper study of this, I am not able to say more, nor to assert the reason for the

change, but it is true that these positive texts are also displayed in the public sphere in Dylan's blog.

To return to my starting point: my child-raising experience. During the period of conducting this project, my wife found a job and returned to Taiwan to work. I turned into a practical single father most of the time. The two children who were blogged by me are now 13 and 11 years old. They both have their own email, accounts for various online services, and their own ways of participating in the online environment. We exchange information using the internet, go out together to play Pokémon GO with our smartphones, and chat with their mother who now works in Taiwan. In the fast-changing world of the internet and the various digital and family practices, there are new phenomena waiting to be studied. This research has provided a version of Taiwanese fatherhood and childhood as they are represented on the internet and ways to understand them. I hope it could thus be a stepping-stone for future research into Taiwanese fatherhood, Taiwanese childhood, and topics related to digital and family practices.



## References

- Abberley, P. (1993). Disabled People and “Normality.” In J. Swain, V. Finkelstein, S. French, & M. Oliver (Eds.), *Disabling Barriers - Enabling Environments* (pp. 107–115). London: Sage.
- Afflerback, S., Carter, S. K., Anthony, A. K., & Grauerholz, L. (2013). Infant-feeding Consumerism in the Age of Intensive Mothering and Risk Society. *Journal of Consumer Culture*, 13(3), 387–405.  
<http://doi.org/10.1177/1469540513485271>
- Agar, M. H. (2008). *The Professional Stranger: An Informal Introduction to Ethnography* (2nd ed.). London: Emerald.
- Albrechtslund, A. (2008). Online Social Networking as Participatory Surveillance. *First Monday*, 13(3). Retrieved from  
<http://journals.uic.edu/ojs/index.php/fm/article/view/2142/1949>
- Allport, G. W. (1942). *Use of Personal Documents in Psychological Science*. New York: Social Science Research Council.
- Almack, K. (2008). Women Parenting Together: A Reflexive Account of the Ways in which the Researcher’s Identity and Experiences May Impact on the Processes of Doing Research. *Sociological Research Online*, 13(1). Retrieved from <http://www.socresonline.org.uk.ezproxy.is.ed.ac.uk/13/1/4.html>
- Anonymous. (2014). Relax, Your Kids Will Be Fine; Helicopter Parents. *The Economist*, 412(8897), 14.  
<http://doi.org/http://dx.doi.org/10.1108/17506200710779521>
- Apple, R. D. (1995). Constructing Mothers: Scientific Motherhood in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries. *Social History of Medicine: The Journal of the Society for the Social History of Medicine*, 8(2), 161–178.



- Arnold, L. B. (2011). 10 Years Out: Presence and Absence in a Long-term Online Mothers' Community. In M. Moravec (Ed.), *Motherhood Online* (pp. 73–96). Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing.
- Arnold, L. B. (2016). Confession in 140 Characters: Intensive Mothering and the #BadMom Twitter. In L. B. Arnold & B. Martin (Eds.), *Taking the Village Online: Mothers, Motherhood and Social Media (Kindle Version)*. Bradford.
- Åsenhed, L., Kilstam, J., Alehagen, S., & Baggens, C. (2014). Becoming a Father is an Emotional Roller Coaster - An Analysis of First-time Fathers' blogs. *Journal of Clinical Nursing*, 23(9–10), 1309–1317. <http://doi.org/10.1111/jocn.12355>
- Barker, M. J., & Iantaffi, A. (2015). Social Models of Disability and Sexual Distress. In *Madness, distress and the politics of disablement* (pp. 139–152). Bristol: Policy Press.
- Barnes, C., & Mercer, G. (2007). *Disability*. Cambridge: Policy Press.
- Barnes, C., Mercer, G., & Shakespeare, T. (1999). *Exploring Disability*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Batchen, G. (2004). *Forget Me Not: Photography and Remembrance*. New York: Princeton Architectural.
- Baxter, J. E. (2005). Socialization and the Material Culture of Childhood. In *The Archaeology of Childhood: Children, Gender, and Material Culture* (pp. 39–56). Walnut Creek, CA: Altamira Press.
- Baym, N. (2007). The Widgetized Self. Retrieved December 12, 2016, from <http://www.onlinefandom.com/archives/the-widgetized-self/>
- Baym, N. (2010). Communities and Network. In *Personal Connections in the Digital Age* (pp. 72–98). Cambridge: Polity.
- Beaulieu, A. (2013). Sociable Hyperlinks: A Technographic Approach to Connectivity. In C. Hine (Ed.), *Virtual Methods: Issues in Social Research on*

*the Internet* (reprint, pp. 183–198). London: Bloomsbury.

- Bell, B. (2007). Private Writing in Public Spaces: Girls' Blogs and Shifting Boundaries. In S. Weber & S. Dixon (Eds.), *Growing Up Online: Young People and Digital Technologies* (pp. 95–112). New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Bell, D. (2001a). Community and Cyberculture. In *An Introduction to Cybercultures* (pp. 92–112). London: Routledge.
- Bell, D. (2001b). Identities in Cyberculture. In *An Introduction to Cybercultures* (pp. 113–136). London: Routledge.
- Beresford, B. (1994). *Positively Parents: Caring for a Severely Disabled Child*. London: HMSO.
- Berger, J. (1972). *Ways of Seeing* (2008 Re-is). London: Penguin.
- Berger, P., & Luckmann, T. (1966). *The Social Construction of Reality, A Treatise in the Sociology of Knowledge* (1991 reprint). London: Penguin.
- Blaisdell, C. (2015). Putting Reflexivity into Practice: Experiences from Ethnographic Fieldwork. *Ethics and Social Welfare*, 9(1), 83–91.  
<http://doi.org/10.1080/17496535.2015.994977>
- Blaise, M. (2005). *Playing It Straight: Uncovering Gender Discourses in the Early Childhood Classroom*. New York: Routledge.  
<http://doi.org/10.3200/JPFT.37.2.60-69>
- Blanchette, A. (2015). The Rise of the “Bad Mom” in the Social Media Age. Retrieved May 24, 2016, from <http://www.startribune.com/bad-moms-backlash-women-brush-off-social-media-perfection/289336021/>
- Boudreau, K. (2007). The Girl's Room: Negotiating Schoolyard Friendships Online. In S. Weber & S. Dixon (Eds.), *Growing Up Online: Young People and Digital Technologies* (pp. 67–80). New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- boyd, danah. (2010). Social Network Sites as Networked Publics: Affordances,

- Dynamics, and Implications. In Z. Papacharissi (Ed.), *Networked Self: Identity, Community, and Culture on Social Network Sites* (pp. 39–58). New York and London: Routledge. <http://doi.org/10.1162/dmal.9780262524834.119>
- Broberg, M. (2011). Expectations of and Reactions to Disability and Normality: Experienced by Parents of Children with Intellectual Disability in Sweden. *Child: Care, Health and Development*, 37(3), 410–417. <http://doi.org/10.1111/j.1365-2214.2010.01198.x>
- Bruns, A. (2008). *Blogs, Wikipedia, Second life, and Beyond: From Production to Produsage*. Oxford: Peter Lang.
- Bruns, A., & Jacobs, J. (2006). Uses of Blogs, Introduction. In A. Bruns & J. Jacobs (Eds.), *Uses of Blogs* (pp. 1–8). New York: Peter Lang.
- Bullingham, L., & Vasconcelos, A. C. (2013). “The Presentation of Self in the Online World”: Goffman and the Study of Online Identities. *Journal of Information Science*, 39(1), 101–112.
- Burrows, D. B. and R. (2007, September 30). Sociology and, of and in Web 2.0: Some Initial Considerations. Retrieved November 29, 2012, from <http://www.socresonline.org.uk/12/5/17.html>
- Butler, J. (2004). *Undoing Gender*. London: Routledge.
- Cairns, K., Johnston, J., & MacKendrick, N. (2013). Feeding the “Organic Child”: Mothering through Ethical Consumption. *Journal of Consumer Culture*, 13(2), 97–118. <http://doi.org/10.1177/1469540513480162>
- CECILYK. (2012). Should We Shape Our Children’s Digital Legacy? Retrieved September 12, 2013, from <http://www.babble.com/mom/digital-legacy-of-children/>
- Center for Educational Research and Evaluation, N. T. N. U., & Department of Human Development and Family Studies, N. T. N. U. (2017). *Kids in Taiwan: National Longitudinal Study of Child Development and Care (Early Report)*.

Taipei.

- Chambers, D. (2013). *Social Media and Personal Relationships: Online Intimacies and Networked Friendship*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Chao, H.-L. (2011a). An Exploration of “Children Centered” and “Parental Anxiety about Their Children Losing at the Starting Point” in Child-Rearing Mentalities and Relationships between Parents and Children. *Journal of Family Education and Counseling*, 10, 31–62.
- Chao, H.-L. (2011b). The “New Good Father” Revealed in the Press and the Politics of Fatherhood in Taiwan. *Journal of General Education*, 16, 73–106.
- Chaplin, E. (2005). The Photograph in Theory. *Sociological Research Online*, 10(1). Retrieved from <http://www.socresonline.org.uk/10/1/chaplin.html>
- Chen, E. S. L., & Rao, N. (2011). Gender Socialization in Chinese Kindergartens: Teachers’ Contributions. *Sex Roles*, 64(1), 103–116.  
<http://doi.org/10.1007/s11199-010-9873-4>
- Chen, H. (2008). Liang Lin’s Concepts of Translation and of Children: The Case of The Ugly Duckling. *Journal of Language and Literature Studies*, (13), 1–25.
- Chen, Q. (2006). On Characteristics of Child Characters in Nursery Rymes: A Case Study of Mandarin Teaching Materials in Kang-shuan Edition. *Journal of Language and Literature Studies*, (7), 119–146.
- Chen, W. (2014). The Ideal Child Characters in the 1950s and 1960s Children Magazines A Study on the “Magazine for Elementary Students” collected by National Museum of Taiwan History. *Li Shi Taiwan: Guo Li Taiwan Li Shi Bo Wu Guan Guan Kan*, (7), 73–103.
- Chen, Y. (2003). *The Making Process of Early Intervention Policy in Taiwan: An Analysis of the Role of Advocacy Groups*. National Chung Cheng University, Taiwan.

- Chinn, M. D., & Fairlie, R. W. (2004). *The Determinants of the Global Digital Divide: A Cross-country Analysis of Computer and Internet Penetration*.
- Chou, Y.-C. (1998). Definition of Family. In *Welfare and Family Social Work of Disable People* (2nd ed., pp. 31–65). Taipei: Wu-nan.
- Christopher, K. (2012). Extensive Mothering: Employed Mothers' Constructions of the Good Mother. *Gender & Society*, 26(1), 73–96.  
<http://doi.org/10.1177/0891243211427700>
- Chu, C., & Yu, R. (2010). *Understanding Chinese Family: A Comparative Study of Taiwan and Southeast China*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Chua, A. (2011). *Battle Hymn of the Tiger Mother*. London: Bloomsbury.
- Chuang, Y. (1985). Family Structure and Reproductive Patterns in a Taiwan Fishing Village. *Bulletin of The Institute of Ethnology Academia Sinica*, 59, 63–90.
- CIA. (2011). Birth Rate: The World Factbook. Retrieved from  
<https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/rankorder/2054rank.html>
- Clifford, J. (1986). Introduction: Partial Truths. In J. Clifford & G. E. Marcus (Eds.), *Writing Culture: The Poetics and Politics of Ethnography*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Cole, K., & Renegar, V. R. (2016). The “wicked Stepmother” Online: Maternal Identity and Personal Narrative in Social Media. In L. B. Arnold & B. Martin (Eds.), *Taking the Village Online: Mothers, Motherhood and Social Media (Kindle Version)*. Bradford.
- Collier, R. (2001). A Hard Time to Be a Father?: Reassessing the Relationship Between Law, Policy, and Family (Practices). *Journal of Law and Society*, 28(4), 520–545.
- Coltrane, S. (1989). Household Labo(u)r and the Routine Production of Gender.

*Social Problems*, 36(5), 473–490.

- Connell, R. (2011). The Neoliberal Parent: Mothers and Fathers in Market Society. In *Confronting Equality: Gender, Knowledge and Global Change* (pp. 41–57). Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Connell, R., & Messerschmidt, J. W. (2005). Hegemonic Masculinity: Rethinking the Concept. *Gender and Society*, 19(6), 829–859.
- Cotterill, P. (1992). Interviewing Women Issues of Friendship, Vulnerability, and Power. *Women's Studies International Forum*, 15(5/6), 593–606.
- Craig, J. (2016). Virtual Outlaws: Feminist Motherhood on the Internet. In L. B. Arnold & B. Martin (Eds.), *Taking the Village Online: Mothers, Motherhood and Social Media (Kindle Version)*. Bradford.
- Cranny-Francis, A., Waring, W., Stavropoloulos, P., & Kirkby, J. (2003). *Gender Studies: Terms and Debates*. Houndmills: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Cunningham, H. (2005). *Children and Childhood in Western Society Since 1500* (2nd ed.). Edinburgh: Pearson Education Limited.
- Daly, K. J. (1995). Reshaping Fatherhood. In W. Marsiglio (Ed.), *Fatherhood: Contemporary Theory, Research, and Social Policy* (pp. 21–40). London: Sage.
- Darrah, C. N., Freeman, J. M., & English-Lueck, J. A. (2007). *Busier Than Ever! Why American Families Can't Slow Down*. Stanford, California: Stanford University Press.
- Davis, J. (1992). Tense in Ethnography: Some Practical Considerations. In J. Okely & H. Callaway (Eds.), *Anthropology And Autobiography* (pp. 205–220). London: Routledge.
- Derakhshan, H. (2015, December 29). Iran's Blogfather: Facebook, Instagram and Twitter are Killing the Web. *The Guardian*. Retrieved from <https://www.theguardian.com/technology/2015/dec/29/irans-blogfather->

facebook-instagram-and-twitter-are-killing-the-web

- Dermott, E. (2003). The “Intimate Father”: Defining Paternal Involvement. *Sociological Research Online*, 8(4). Retrieved from <http://www.socresonline.org.uk/8/4/dermott.html>
- Dermott, E., & Seymour, J. (2011). Developing “Displaying Families”: A Possibility for the Future of the Sociology of Personal Life. In E. Dermott & J. Seymour (Eds.), *Displaying Families* (pp. 3–18). Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.
- DGBAS. (2010a). Types of Childcare Taken by Fertile Married Women Aged 15-49 Years. Retrieved April 10, 2013, from <http://www.dgbas.gov.tw/public/Attachment/13159281771.pdf>
- DGBAS. (2010b, January 19). Current Employment Status of Married Women Aged 15-64 Years. Retrieved October 1, 2013, from <http://www.dgbas.gov.tw/ct.asp?xItem=11661&CtNode=3304&mp=1>
- Donati, P. R. (1992). Political Discourse Analysis. In M. Diani & R. Eyerman (Eds.), *Studying Collective Action* (pp. 136–167). London: Sage.
- Doucet, A. (2011). “It”’s Just Not Good for a Man to be Interested in Other People’s Children’: Fathers, Public Displays of Care and “Relevant Others.” In E. Dermott & J. Seymour (Eds.), *Displaying Families* (pp. 81–101). Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Doucet, A., & Mauthner, N. S. (2008). What can be known and how? Narrated subjects and the Listening Guide. *Qualitative Research*, 8(3), 399–409. <http://doi.org/10.1177/1468794106093636>
- Drentea, P., & Moren-Cross, J. L. (2005). Social Capital and Social Support on the Web: The Case of an Internet Mother Site. *Sociology of Health and Illness*, 27(7), 920–943. <http://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-9566.2005.00464.x>
- Eastham, L. A. (2011). Research Using Blogs for Data: Public Documents or Private Musings? *Research in Nursing and Health*, 34, 353–361.

- Edwards, B. (2002). Deep Insider Research. *Qualitative Research Journal*, 2(1), 71–84.
- Emmison, M. (2011). Conceptualizing Visual Data. In D. Silverman (Ed.), *Qualitative Research* (3rd ed., pp. 234–249). London: Sage.
- Ennis, L. R. (Ed.). (2014). *Intensive Mothering: The Cultural Contradictions of Modern Motherhood* (Kindle). Bradford: Demeter Press.
- Facebook. (n.d.). How Do I Report a Deceased Person or an Account on Facebook that Needs to be Memorialized? Retrieved March 20, 2017, from <https://www.facebook.com/help/150486848354038/>
- Featherstone, B. (2003). Taking Fathers Seriously. *British Journal of Social Work*, 33, 239–254.
- Feng, Y., Li, H. wen, & Xie, W. (2011). Review and Prospects of Children and Youth Welfare in this 100 years of R.O.C. *Community Development Quarterly*, 133, 309–327.
- Fina, A. De, & Georgakopoulou, A. (2008). Analysing narratives as practices. *Qualitative Research*, 8(3), 379–387. <http://doi.org/10.1177/1468794106093634>
- Finch, J. (2007). Displaying Families. *Sociology*, 41(1), 65–81.
- Finkelstein, V. (1998). Emancipating Disabling Studies. In T. Shakespeare (Ed.), *The Disability Reader: Social Sciences Perspectives* (pp. 28–52). London: Cassell.
- Fisher, B., Margolis, M., & Resnick, D. (1996). Breaking Ground on the Virtual Frontier : Surveying Civic Life on the Internet. *The American Sociologist*, 27(1), 11–29. <http://doi.org/10.1007/BF02691995>
- Fisher, K. (1997, September 30). Locating Frames in the Discursive Universe. Retrieved April 9, 2013, from <http://www.socresonline.org.uk/2/3/4.html>
- Fong, V. L. (2002). China’s One-child Policy and the Empowerment of Urban Daughters. *American Anthropologist*, 104(4), 1098–1109. Retrieved from



<http://www.jstor.org/stable/661083>

- Fox, B. (2009). *When Couples Become Parents: The Creation of Gender in the Transition to Parenthood*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.
- French, S. (1993). "Can You See the Rainbow?" The Roots of Denial. In J. Swain, V. Finkelstein, S. French, & M. Oliver (Eds.), *Disabling Barriers - Enabling Environments* (pp. 69–77). London: Sage.
- Friedman, H. L. (2013). *Playing to Win: Raising Children in a Competitive Culture* (University). Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Fuentes, M., & Brembeck, H. (2017). Best for Baby? Framing Weaning Practice and Motherhood in Web-mediated Marketing. *Consumption Markets & Culture*, 20(2), 153–175. <http://doi.org/10.1080/10253866.2016.1205493>
- Gallacher, L. (n.d.). Socio-cultural Approaches to Childhood and Youth. In M. J. Kehily (Ed.), *Understanding Childhood: A Cross-Diciplinary Approach*. Bristol: Policy Press.
- Gatrell, C. (2007). Whose Child is it Anyway? The Negotiation of Paternal Entitlements within Marriage. *The Sociological Review*, 55(2), 352–372.
- Gibbs, M., Meese, J., Arnold, M., & Nansen, B. (2015). # Funeral and Instagram : Death , Social Media , and Platform Vernacular. *Information, Communication & Society*, 18(3), 255–268. <http://doi.org/10.1080/1369118X.2014.987152>
- Gillmor, D. (2006). *We the Media: Grassroots Journalism by the People, for the People*. Sebastopol: O'Reilly Media.
- Goffman, E. (1971). *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life*. Harmondsworth: Penguin.
- Goffman, E. (1974). *Frame Analysis: An Essay on the Organization of Experience*. New York: Harper & Row.
- Goffman, E. (1976). *Gender Advertisements*. London and Basingstoke: Macmillan.

- Goldman, J. (1999). Privacy and Individual Empowerment. In C. J. Bennett & R. Grant (Eds.), *Visions of Privacy, Policy Choices for the Digital Age* (pp. 97–115). Toronto: University of Toronto Press.
- Google. (n.d.). Submit A Request Regarding A Deceased User's Account. Retrieved March 21, 2017, from <https://support.google.com/accounts/troubleshooter/6357590?hl=en>
- Goriss-Hunter, A. (2016). Hip Mama: Mother Outlaws in Cyberspaces. In L. B. Arnold & B. Martin (Eds.), *Taking the Village Online: Mothers, Motherhood and Social Media (Kindle Version)*. Bradford.
- Green, S. E. (2003). “What Do You Mean ‘What’s Wrong with Her?’”: Stigma and the Lives of Families of Children with Disabilities. *Social Science and Medicine*, 57(8), 1361–1374.
- Green, S. E. (2007). “We’re Tired, not Sad”: Benefits and Burdens of Mothering a Child with a Disability. *Social Science and Medicine*, 64(1), 150–163. <http://doi.org/10.1016/j.socscimed.2006.08.025>
- Greenhalgh, S. (1985). Sexual Stratification: The Other Side of “Growth with Equity” in East Asia. *Population and Development Review*, 11(2), 265–314.
- Gregory, A., & Milner, S. (2005). Fatherhood: Comparative Western Perspectives. Retrieved September 25, 2013, from <https://workfamily.sas.upenn.edu/wfrn-repo/object/zy4lk5gn3rt0su36>
- Gregory, A., & Milner, S. (2011). What is “New” about Fatherhood?: The Social Construction of Fatherhood in France and the UK. *Men and Masculinities*, 14(5), 588–606.
- Griffith, A. I. (1998). Insider / Outsider: Epistemological Privilege and Mothering Work. *Human Studies*, 21(4), 361–76. <http://doi.org/10.1023/A:1005421211078>
- Gurstein, M. (2003, December 1). Effective Use: A Community Informatics Strategy Beyond the Digital Divide. Retrieved November 30, 2012, from

<http://firstmonday.org/htbin/cgiwrap/bin/ojs/index.php/fm/article/viewArticle/1107/1027#g2>

- Hall, S. (1997). *Representation: cultural representations and signifying practices*. London: Sage.
- Hand, M. (2012). *Ubiquitous Photography*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Hays, S. (1996). *The Cultural Contradictions of Motherhood*. New Haven and London: Yale University Press.
- Health Promotion Administration. (2014). *Child Health Handbook*. Taipei: Ministry of Health and Welfare, R.O.C. Retrieved from <http://www.hpa.gov.tw/download/ThemeULFile/103年兒童健康手冊.pdf>
- Hearn, J., & Pringle, K. (2006). Men, Masculinities and Children: Some European Perspectives. *Critical Social Policy*, 26, 365–389.
- Heath, C. (2011). Embodied Action: Video and the Analysis of Social Interaction. In D. Silverman (Ed.), *Qualitative Research* (3rd ed., pp. 250–269). London: Sage.
- Helmond, A. (2010). Identity 2.0: Constructing identity with cultural software. *Www.annehelmond.nl*, (January), 1–28. Retrieved from [http://www.annehelmond.nl/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2010/01/helmond\\_identity20\\_dmiconference.pdf](http://www.annehelmond.nl/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2010/01/helmond_identity20_dmiconference.pdf)
- Henwood, K., & Procter, J. (2003). The “Good Father”: Reading Men’s Accounts of Paternal Involvement During the Transition to First-time Fatherhood. *British Journal of Social Psychology*, 42, 337–355.
- Hiltz, J. (2015). Helicopter Parents Can Be A Good Thing. *Phi Delta Kappan*, 96(7), 26–29. <http://doi.org/10.1007/s13398-014-0173-7.2>
- Hine, C. (2000). *Virtual Ethnography*. London: Sage.
- Hine, C. (2008). Virtual Ethnography: Modes, Varieties, Affordances. In N. G. Fielding, R. M. Lee, & G. Blank (Eds.), *The SAGE Handbook of Online*

*Research Methods* (pp. 257–270). Sage.

- Hine, C. (2012). Headlice eradication as everyday engagement with science: An analysis of online parenting discussions. *Public Understanding of Science*, 23(5), 574–591. <http://doi.org/10.1177/0963662512453419>
- Hine, C. (2015a). *Ethnography for the Internet: Embedded, Embodied and Everyday*. London: Bloomsbury Academic.
- Hine, C. (2015b). The E 3 Internet: Embedded , Embodied , Everyday Internet. In *Ethnography for the Internet: Embedded, Embodied and Everyday* (pp. 19–54). London: Bloomsbury Academic.
- Hobson, B. (Ed.). (2002). *Making Men into Fathers: Men, Masculinities and the Social Politics of Fatherhood*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Hobson, B., & Morgan, D. (2002). Introduction: Making Men into Fathers. In B. Hobson (Ed.), *Making Men into Fathers: Men, Masculinities and the Social Politics of Fatherhood* (pp. 1–21). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Holland, P. (1992). *What is A Child? Popular Images of Childhood*. London: Virago.
- Holloway, S. L., & Valentine, G. (2003). Cybergeographies. In *Cyberkids: Children in the Information Age* (pp. 127–152). London: RoutledgeFalmer.
- Hong, M.-H. (2012). The Changes in Household Consumption and Savings as the Gap between the Rich and Poor Increased from 1996 to 2009. *Social Analysis*, 5, 65–96.
- Hookway, N. (2008). “Entering the Blogosphere”: Some Strategies for Using Blogs in Social Research. *Qualitative Research*, 8(1), 91–113. <http://doi.org/10.1177/1468794107085298>
- Hsieh, C., & Lin, C. (2014). What Has Been Globalized? Internationalization in Taiwan. *The Taiwanese Political Science Review*, 12, 139–215.
- Hsu, T. H. (2005). *Being a 「?」 Father-- A Narrative Inquiry of a Beginner*

*Father*. Shu-Te University.

- Huang, P. (2006). The Mission (Errand) of Child Welfare Bureau in Ministry of Interior on promoting and Executing Early Treatment Services for Children with Developmental Delay. *Journal of Child and Youth Welfare*, 10, 1–5.
- Huang, T. (2012). Cultural Analyses in a Taiwanese Kindergarten: A Postcolonial Reflection and Study. *International Journal of Educational Development*, 33(1), 15–24. <http://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijedudev.2012.01.010>
- Huang, T. (2013). A Research of Partents' View on Characteristic Education: Take a Public Kindergarten in Tainan City as an Example. *Early Childhood Education Quarterly*, 312, 61–78.
- Huang, T., & Ou, Y.-S. (2013). Rethinking Education beyond Neoliberalism: From the Perspective of Curriculum Publicness. *Alternative Pedagogy*, 3, 1–24.
- Hwu, L.-J. (2000). *The Lived Experience of Role Transition to Being New Fatherhood*. Kaohsiung Medical University.
- Interagency Advisory Panel on Research Ethics. (2010, December 7). Tri-Council Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans. Retrieved August 16, 2013, from <http://www.ethics.gc.ca/eng/policy-politique/initiatives/tcps2-eptc2/chapter2-chapitre2/#toc02-1a>
- James, A., & Curtis, P. (2010). Family Displays and Personal Lives. *Sociology*, 44(6), 1163–1180.
- James, A., & James, A. L. (2004). *Constructing Childhood: Theory, Plicy and Social Practice*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- James, A., Jenks, C., & Prout, A. (1998). The Sociological Child. In *Theorizing Childhood* (pp. 22–34). Cambridge: Polity Press.
- James, A., & Prout, A. (2005). A New Paradigm for the Sociology of Childhood? Provenance, Promise and Problems. In A. James & A. Prout (Eds.),

*Constructing and Reconstructing Childhood: Contemporary Issues in the Sociological Study of Childhood* (e-book, pp. 7–32). London: Taylor & Francis e-Library. Retrieved from

[http://www.dawsonera.com/depp/reader/protected/direct/AbstractView,title.\\$ReaderFunctions.eBookView.sdirect?state:reader/protected/AbstractView=ZH4sIAAAAAAAAAAFvzloG1XJiBgYGJkYG1JLMkJ5WBNTWzOCmvhIHX0tzCwMjA2NjMyMzAoJyDAYcMAIcAfvBDAAAA](http://www.dawsonera.com/depp/reader/protected/direct/AbstractView,title.$ReaderFunctions.eBookView.sdirect?state:reader/protected/AbstractView=ZH4sIAAAAAAAAAAFvzloG1XJiBgYGJkYG1JLMkJ5WBNTWzOCmvhIHX0tzCwMjA2NjMyMzAoJyDAYcMAIcAfvBDAAAA)

Jansson, M. (2009). Feeding Children and Protecting Women: The Emergence of Breastfeeding as an International Concern. *Women's Studies International Forum*, 32(3), 240–248. <http://doi.org/10.1016/j.wsif.2009.05.011>

Jenks, C. (2004). Constructing Childhood Sociologically. In M. J. Kehily (Ed.), *An Introduction to Childhood Studies* (pp. 77–95). Berkshire: Open University Press.

Jens Qvortrup. (1994). Childhood Matters: An Introduction. In J. Qvortrup, M. Bardy, G. Sgritta, & H. Wintersberger (Eds.), *Childhood Matters, Social Theory, Practice and Politics* (pp. 1–23). Hants: Avebury.

Jesella, K. (2009). Naughty Mommies. *The American Prospect*, 20(3), 31–33.

Jiang, H., & Chen, Y. (2008). Fathering and Parental Beliefs in Taiwan Hakka Families-With School-Aged Children. *Journal of Family Education and Counseling*, 5, 61–80.

Johnston, D. D., & Swanson, D. H. (2006). Constructing the “Good Mother”: The Experience of Mothering Ideologies by Work Status. *Sex Roles*, 54(7–8), 509–519. <http://doi.org/10.1007/s11199-006-9021-3>

Juang, B. (2007). *Fathering Experiences among Fathers of Young Children in a Dual Career Family*. National Changhua University of Education.

Karlin, S. (1999). Digital Death. *Upside*, 11(5), 1999.

Kehily, M. J. (2004). Understanding Childhood: An Introduction to Some Key

- Themes and Issues. In M. J. Kehily (Ed.), *An Introduction to Childhood Studies* (pp. 1–22). Berkshire: Open University Press.
- Knaak, S. J. (2010). Contextualising Risk, Constructing Choice: Breastfeeding and Good Mothering in Risk Society. *Health, Risk & Society*, 12(4), 345–355.  
<http://doi.org/10.1080/13698571003789666>
- Knijn, T. (1994). Towards Post-Paternalism? Social and Theoretical Changes in Fatherhood. Retrieved July 11, 2013, from  
<http://arno.uvt.nl/show.cgi?fid=105530>
- Knijn, T., & Selten, P. (2002). Transformations of Fatherhood: the Netherlands. In B. Hobson (Ed.), *Making Men into Fathers: Men, Masculinities and the Social Politics of Fatherhood* (pp. 168–187). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Kohler, M., Kilgo, J., & Christensen, L. M. (2012). Among the Periodicals: The Tiger Mom Phenomenon. *Childhood Education*, 88(1), 69–71.  
<http://doi.org/10.1080/00094056.2012.643738>
- Kozinets, R. V. (2012). *Netnography, Doing Ethnographic Research Online*. London: Sage.
- Kuo, M., & Chen, R. (2012). The Relations of Paternal Efficacy, Maternal Encouraging Behaviors on Father Involvement in Parenting for Fathers with Young Children in Dual-earner-families. *Journal of Family Education and Counseling*, 13, 57–80.
- Lai, S. (2011). Variations of Chinese Families in Taiwan and China. Book Review: Understanding Chinese Families: A Comparative Study of Taiwan and Southeast China. *Taiwanese Sociology*, 21, 199–210. Retrieved from  
<http://books.google.co.uk/books?id=G9lvC8y0YSMC>
- Lai, Y. (2013). Against Same Sex Marriage: How Would We Write Our Genealogy in the Future? Retrieved February 6, 2015, from  
[http://www.ettoday.net/news/20131125/300180.htm?from=fb\\_et\\_news](http://www.ettoday.net/news/20131125/300180.htm?from=fb_et_news)

- Leaver, T. (2013). The Social Media Contradiction: Data Mining and Digital Death. *M/C a Journal of Media and Culture*, 16(2). Retrieved from <http://journal.media-culture.org.au/index.php/mcjournal/article/view/625>
- Leaver, T. (2015a). Born Digital? Presence, Privacy, and Intimate Surveillance. In J. Hartley & W. Qu (Eds.), *Re-orientation: Translingual Transcultural Transmedia: Studies in Narrative, Language, Identity, and Knowledge* (pp. 149–160). Shanghai: Fudan University Press.
- Leaver, T. (2015b). Researching the Ends of Identity: Birth and Death on Social Media. *Social Media + Society*, 1(1), 1–2. <http://doi.org/10.1177/2056305115578877>
- Leckart, S. (2012). The Facebook-Free Baby: Are You a Mom or Dad Who's Guilty of "Oversharenting"? The Cure May Be to Not Share at All. Retrieved September 9, 2013, from <http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424052702304451104577392041180138910.html>
- Lee, E. J. (2008). Living with Risk in the Age of "Intensive Motherhood": Maternal Identity and Infant Feeding. *Health, Risk & Society*, 10(5), 467–477. <http://doi.org/10.1080/13698570802383432>
- Lee, N. (2001). *Childhood and Society: Growing Up in an Age of Uncertainty*. Buckingham: Open University Press.
- Lee, S. (2007). Don't Be Helicopter Parents. *Common Wealth*, 368, 106–115.
- Leggatt-Cook, C., & Chamberlain, K. (2011). Blogging for Weight Loss: Personal Accountability, Writing Selves, and the Weight-loss Blogosphere. *Sociology Of Health & Illness*, 34(7), 963–977.
- Leiter, V. (2004). Dilemmas in Sharing Care: Maternal Provision of Professionally Driven Therapy for Children with Disablilites. *Social Science and Medicine*, 58(4), 837–849.



- Les enphants. (2016, March 9). Seventy Percent of New Generation Taiwanese Mothers Are Receiving Incorrect Child-raising Information? *Storm Media*. Taipei. Retrieved from <http://www.storm.mg/stylish/85098>
- Levitt, J. M. (2017). Exploring How the Social Model of Disability Can Be Re-invigorated: in Response to Mike Oliver. *Disability & Society*, 32(4), 589–594. <http://doi.org/10.1080/09687599.2017.1300390>
- Li, D., & Walejko, G. (2008). Splogs and Abandoned Blogs: The Perils of Sampling Bloggers and Their Blogs. *Information, Communication & Society*, 11(2), 279–296. <http://doi.org/10.1080/13691180801947976>
- Lien, S. (2012). The Analysis of the Portrayals of Older Characters on Television Commercials. *Journal of Radio & Television Studies*, 35, 30–60.
- Lin, C. L., & Tseng, M. (2004). Let Your Baby Win at the Starting Point: Ways of Prenatal Education During Pregnancy. *Baby and Mother*, 334, 26–44.
- Lin, T. (2013). The Lost Decade: Changing Class Identity and Ideology in Taiwan. *Journal of Social Sciences and Philosophy*, 12, 689–734.
- Lin, W. (2012). *Social Welfare in Taiwan: An Analysis of History and Institution* (2nd ed.). Taipei: Wu-nan.
- Liu, J. (2001). *Economic Analysis of Postwar Taiwan*. Taipei: Renjian.
- Liu, S. (2016). Go Forward after Frustration: My experience of Participating in the Public Hearings for the Gender Equity Education Act. *Taiwan Human Rights Journal*, 3(3), 121–134.
- Livesay, C. (2011). The Other Side of the (Gender) Coin: Stay-at-home Fathers' Use of Online Discussion Groups. In M. Moravec (Ed.), *Motherhood Online* (pp. 168–179). Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing.
- Lockard, J. (1997). Progressive Politics, Electronic Individualism and the Myth of Virtual Community. In D. Porter (Ed.), *Internet Culture* (pp. 219–232). New

York: Routledge.

- Loe, M., Cumpstone, T., & Miller, S. B. (2016). Feminist Parenting Online: Community, Contestation, and Change. In L. B. Arnold & B. Martin (Eds.), *Taking the Village Online: Mothers, Motherhood and Social Media (Kindle Version)*. Bradford.
- Lomax, H., & Casey, N. (1998, June 30). Recording Social Life: Reflexivity and Video Methodology. Retrieved April 9, 2013, from <http://www.socresonline.org.uk/3/2/1.html>
- Lopez, L. K. (2009). The Radical Act of “Mommy Blogging”: Redefining Motherhood Through the Blogosphere. *New Media & Society*, 11(729), 729–745.
- Lui, P. P., & Rollock, D. (2013). Tiger Mother: Popular and Psychological Scientific Perspectives on Asian Culture and Parenting. *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry*, 83(4), 450–456. <http://doi.org/10.1111/ajop.12043>
- Maccoby, E. E. (2000). Perspectives on Gender Development. *International Journal of Behavioral Development*, 24(4), 398–406. <http://doi.org/10.1080/016502500750037946>
- Maeve Shearlaw. (2016, January 25). Egypt Five Years On: Was It Ever a Social Media Revolution. *The Guardian*. Retrieved from <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/jan/25/egypt-5-years-on-was-it-ever-a-social-media-revolution>
- Mallett, R., & Runswick-Cole, K. (2014). *Approaching Disability: Critical Issues and Perspectives*. (1st ed.). London: Routledge.
- Markham, A. N. (2011). Internet Research. In D. Silverman (Ed.), *Qualitative Research* (3rd ed., pp. 111–127). London: Sage.
- Markham, A. N., & Buchanan, E. (2012). Ethical Decision-making and Internet Research 2.0: Recommendations from the AOIR Ethics Working Committee.

Retrieved July 12, 2013, from <http://www.aoir.org/reports/ethics2.pdf>

- Marsiglio, W. (1991). Paternal Engagement Activities with Minor Children. *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, 53, 973–986.
- Marsiglio, W. (1995). Fatherhood Scholarship: An Overview and Agenda for the Future. In W. Marsiglio (Ed.), *Fatherhood: Contemporary Theory, Research, and Social Policy* (pp. 1–20). London: Sage.
- Marwick, A. E. (2012). The Public Domain: Social Surveillance in Everyday Life. *Surveillance and Society*, 9(4), 378–393.
- Mason, J. (2002). *Qualitative Researching* (2nd ed.). London: Sage.  
<http://doi.org/10.1159/000105503>
- Mau, W., & Huang, N. (2010). The First-Time Father's Paternal Experience during the Child's First Year of Life-Case Studies for Six Fathers with College Education. *Journal of Human Development and Family Studies*, 12, 31–53.
- Mauthner, N. S., & Doucet, A. (2003). Reflexive Accounts and Accounts of Reflexivity in Qualitative Data Analysis. *Sociology*, 37(3), 413–431.  
<http://doi.org/10.1177/00380385030373002>
- Mayall, B. (1996). *Children, Health and the Social Order*. Buckingham: Open University Press.
- McLaughlin, J. (2006). Conceptualising Intensive Caring Activities: the Changing Lives of Families with Young Disabled Children. *Sociological Research Online*, 11(1). Retrieved from <http://www.socresonline.org.uk/11/1/mclaughlin.html>
- Merton, R. K. (1972). Insiders and Outsiders: A Chapter in the Sociology of Knowledge, 78(1), 9–47.
- Miller, T. (2011). *Making Sense of Fatherhood: Gender, Caring and Work*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Miller, T., & Dermott, E. (2015). Contemporary Fatherhood: Continuity, Change and

Future. *Families, Relationships and Societies*, 4(2).  
<http://doi.org/10.1332/204674315X14281321892287>

- Ministry of Justice. Civil Code (2012). Retrieved from  
<http://law.moj.gov.tw/Eng/LawClass/LawAll.aspx?PCode=B0000001>
- Ministry of Justice. (2012b). The Protection of Children and Youths Welfare and Rights Act. Retrieved February 5, 2013, from  
<http://law.moj.gov.tw/Eng/LawClass/LawAll.aspx?PCode=D0050001>
- Ministry of the Interior. (2013). Monthly Bulletin of Interior Statistics. Retrieved September 30, 2013, from <http://sowf.moi.gov.tw/stat/month/list.htm>
- Mo, L. (1997). Household Attitudes of Married Males in the Chinese Families. *Soochow Journal of Social Work*, 3, 117–155.
- Morgan, D. (1996). *Family Connections: An Introduction to Family Studies*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Morgan, D. (2002). Epilogue. In B. Hobson (Ed.), *Making Men into Fathers: Men, Masculinities and the Social Politics of Fatherhood* (pp. 273–286). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Morgan, D. (2004). Everyday Life and Family Practices. In E. B. Silva & T. Bennett (Eds.), *Contemporary Culture and Everyday Life* (pp. 37–51). Durham: Sociology Press.
- Morris, J. (1993). Prejudice. In J. Swain, V. Finkelstein, S. French, & M. Oliver (Eds.), *Disabling Barriers - Enabling Environments* (pp. 101–106). London: Sage.
- Myers, G. (2010). *The Discourse of Blogs and Wikis*. London: Continuum International Publishing Group.
- Oakley, A. (1998). Gender, Methodology and People's Ways of Knowing: Some Problems with Feminism and The Paradigm Debate in Social Science.

*Sociology*, 32(4), 707–731.

- Oliver, M. (1993). Re-defining Disability: A Challenge to Research. In J. Swain, V. Finkelstein, S. French, & M. Oliver (Eds.), *Disabling Barriers - Enabling Environments* (pp. 61–68). London: Sage.
- Oliver, M. (2013). The Social Model of Disability: Thirty Years On. *Disability & Society*, 28(7), 1024–1026. <http://doi.org/10.1080/09687599.2013.818773>
- Orton-Johnson, K. (2016). Digitally Mediated Motherhood: Mommy Blogs and Reading Mothering. In L. B. Arnold & B. Martin (Eds.), *Taking the Village Online: Mothers, Motherhood and Social Media (Kindle Version)*. Bradford.
- Palladino, H. (2014). The Cultural Contradictions of Fatherhood: Is There An Ideology of Intensive Fathering? In L. R. Ennis (Ed.), *Intensive Mothering: The Cultural Contradictions of Modern Motherhood (Kindle)*. Bradford.
- Park, H. W., & Thelwall, M. (2013). The Network Approach to Web Hyperlink Research and its Utility for Science Communication. In C. Hine (Ed.), *Virtual Methods: Issues in Social Research on the Internet* (reprint, pp. 171–182). London: Bloomsbury.
- Parsons, T. (1956). The American family: Its Relation to Personality and the Social Structure. In T. Parsons & R. F. Bales (Eds.), *Family, Socialization and Interaction Process* (pp. 3–33). London: RKP.
- Patton, M. Q. (2002). *Qualitative Research and Evaluation Methods*. London: Sage.
- Pauwels, L. (2008). A Private Visual Practice Going Public? Social Functions and Sociological Research Opportunities of Web-based Family Photography. *Visual Studies*, 23(1), 34–49. <http://doi.org/10.1080/14725860801908528>
- Piaget, J. (1982). The Necessity and Significance of Comparative Research in Developmental Psychology. In C. Jenks (Ed.), *The Sociology of Childhood: Essential Readings* (pp. 207–218). London: Batsford Academic and Educational.

- Pilcher, J., & Whelehan, I. (2004). *Fifty Key Concepts in Gender Studies*. London: Sage.
- Plummer, K. (2001). Accessories to a Life Story: From Written Diaries to Video Diaries. In *Documents of Life 2: An Invitation to a Critical Humanism* (pp. 48–77). London: Sage.
- Polak, M. (2007). “I Think We Must be Normal ...There are Too Many of Us for This to be Abnormal!!!”: Girls Creating Indentity and Forming Community in Pro-Ana/Mia Websites. In S. Weber & S. Dixon (Eds.), *Growing Up Online: Young People and Digital Technologies*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Poster, M. (2001). The Digital Subject and Cultural Theory. In *What’s the Matter with the Internet?* (pp. 60–77). Minneapolis: The University of Minnesota Press.
- Pratt, M. L. (1986). Fieldwork in Common Places. In *Writing Culture: The Poetics and Politics of Ethnography* (pp. 27–50). Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Prior, L. (2011). Using Documents in Social Research. In D. Silverman (Ed.), *Qualitative Research* (3rd ed.). London: Sage.
- Prout, A. (2005). *The Future of Childhood*. London: Routledge Falmer.
- Qi, X., & Liu, L. (2007). Differences between Reader/Writer Responsible Languages Reflected in EFL Learners’ Writing. *Intercultural Communication Studies*, 16(3).
- Ramazanoglu, C., & Holland, J. (2002). *Feminist Methodology: Challenges and CHOices*. London: Sage.
- Ranson, G. (2012). Men, Paid Employment and Family Responsibilities: Conceptualizing the “Working father.” *Gender, Work and Organization*, 19(6), 741–761.
- Rettberg, J. W. (2008). *Blogging*. Cambridge: Polity Press.

- Rheingold, H. (1994). *The Virtual Community: Homesteading on the Electronic Frontier*. New York: Harper Perennial.
- Ritchie, J., Spencer, L., & O'Connor, W. (2003). Carrying out Qualitative Analysis. In J. Ritchie & J. Lewis (Eds.), *Qualitative Research Practice: A Guide for Social Science Students and Researchers* (pp. 219–262). London: Sage.
- Ritchie, M. (2011). The China Syndrome.(Battle Hymn of the Tiger Mother by Amy Chua). *The Times Educational Supplement*, (4931), 11–15.  
<http://doi.org/http://dx.doi.org/10.1108/17506200710779521>
- Sanchez, L., & Thomson, E. (1997). Becoming Mothers and Fathers: Parenthood, Gender, and the Division of Labor. *Gender and Society*, 11(6), 747–772.
- Schatzman, L., & Strauss, A. L. (1973). *Field Research: Strategies for a Natural Sociology*. Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall.
- Scott, J. (1990). *A Matter of Record: Documentary Sources in Social Research*. Cambridge: Polity.
- Shakespeare, T. (2006). *Disability Rights and Wrongs*. New York: Routledge.
- Shenker, J. (2012, January 22). Egypt Pardons Jailed Blogger as Generals Brace for Anniversary Protests. *The Guardian*. Cairo. Retrieved from <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2012/jan/22/egypt-pardons-blogger-anniversary-protests>
- Shih, Y. (2012). *The Journey of Becoming and Being a Mother Raising a Disabled Child - The Transformations between and across Social Positions*. Newcastle University.
- Smolinski, A. B. (2016). Boobs, Babes, and Boots: Breastfeeding Support, Facebook, and Military Mothers. In L. B. Arnold & B. Martin (Eds.), *Taking the Village Online: Mothers, Motherhood and Social Media (Kindle Version)*. Bradford: Demeter Press.

- Smyth, C., & Craig, L. (2017). Conforming to Intensive Parenting Ideals: Willingness, Reluctance and Social Context. *Families, Relationships and Societies*, 6(1), 107–124. <http://doi.org/10.1332/204674315X14393034138937>
- Snee, H. (2010). Realities Toolkit #10 Using Blog Analysis. Retrieved April 6, 2013, from <http://eprints.ncrm.ac.uk/1321/2/10-toolkit-blog-analysis.pdf>
- Sontag, S. (1977). *On Photography* (1987 Re-pr). London: Penguin.
- Spence, J., & Holland, P. (1991). *Family Snaps: The Meaning of Domestic Photography*. (J. Spence & P. Holland, Eds.). London: Virago.
- Stainton-Rogers, R., & Stainton-Rogers, W. (1992). *Stories of Childhood*. Hemel Hempstead: Harvester Wheatsheaf.
- Stamm, T., Yu, C., & Kennedy, S. (2016). Mothers of Honor: Intentional Creation of Pregnancy, Birth, and Postpartum Support. In L. B. Arnold & B. Martin (Eds.), *Taking the Village Online: Mothers, Motherhood and Social Media (Kindle Version)*. Bradford: Demeter Press.
- Stern, S. R. (1999). Adolescent Girls' Expression on Web Home Pages: Spirited, Sombre and Self-Conscious Sites. *Convergence: The International Journal of Research into New Media Technologies*, 5, 22–41. Retrieved from <http://con.sagepub.com/content/5/4/22>
- Su, S. G. (1922). *The Chinese Family System*. New York: Columbia University.
- Su, X. (1997). Win at the Starting Point: Neonatal Vaccination. *Mombaby*, 126, 206–207.
- Sun, L. K. (1990). *The Deep Structure of Chinese Culture*. Taipei: Ton-san.
- Tang, G. (2008). *Teach You to Understand Child Health Handbook*. Taipei: New Parents (Cite).
- Taylor, J. (2011). The Intimate Insider: Negotiating the Ethics of Friendship When Doing Insider Research. *Qualitative Research*, 11(1), 03–22.



- Technorati. (2012). State of the Blogosphere 2011. Retrieved from <http://technorati.com/social-media/article/state-of-the-blogosphere-2011-introduction/>
- The Child Welfare League Foundation. (2013). Survey Report: Image of Father 2013. Retrieved August 15, 2013, from [http://www.children.org.tw/news/advocacy\\_detail/1057](http://www.children.org.tw/news/advocacy_detail/1057)
- The Initium. (2016). What are the Demands of People Who Against Same Sex Marriage? Retrieved June 20, 2012, from <https://theinitium.com/article/20161225-taiwan-same-sex-marriage1/>
- Thompson-Hayes, M. (2011). Parenting Children with Autism Online: Creating Community and Support through Blogging. In M. Moravec (Ed.), *Motherhood Online* (pp. 258–265). Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing.
- Thorne, B. (1993). *Gender Play: Girls and Boys in School*. Buckingham: Open University Press.
- Tisdall, K., Davis, J., & Gallagher, M. (2009). *Researching with Children and Young People*. London: Sage.
- Trammell, K. D., & Keshelashvili, A. (2005). Examining the New Influencers: A Self-presentation Study of A-List Blogs. *Journalism and Mass Communication Quarterly*, 82(4), 968–982.
- Trottier, D. (2012). *Social Media as Surveillance: Rethinking Visibility in a Converging World*. Surrey: Ashgate.
- Tseng, F. (2008). Discovering the “Developmentally Delayed” Scientific Knowledge, Power Techniques and Social Ordering. *Taiwanese Sociology*, 15, 165–215.
- Tseng, F. (2010). *Governing the Risk of Child Development: Developmental Delay, Surveillance Network and Parenting Politics*. National Taiwan University.

- Tu, H.-C. (1999). *The First Month of Fatherhood - Cognitive Behaviors in Paternal Role Enactment*. National Taiwan University.
- Turner, G. (2010). *Ordinary People and the Media: The Demotic Turn*. London: Sage.
- Uldam, J. (2014). Corporate Management of Visibility and the Fantasy of the Post-political: Social Media and Surveillance. *New Media & Society*, 18(2), 201–219. <http://doi.org/10.1177/1461444814541526>
- Ungar, M. (2009). Overprotective Parenting: Helping Parents Provide Children the Right Amount of Risk and Responsibility. *The American Journal of Family Therapy*, 37(3), 258–271. <http://doi.org/10.1080/01926180802534247>
- Valtchanov, B. L., Parry, D. C., & Glover, T. D. (2016). From “Facebooking” and “Flaming” to a “Moms’ Support Network”: Reinforcing and Resisting Intensive Mothering Online. In L. B. Arnold & B. Martin (Eds.), *Taking the Village Online: Mothers, Motherhood and Social Media (Kindle Version)*. Bradford.
- Veazey, L. W. (2016). Mothering in the Digital Diaspora. In L. B. Arnold & B. Martin (Eds.), *Taking the Village Online: Mothers, Motherhood and Social Media (Kindle Version)*. Bradford.
- Vernon, A., & Swain, J. (2002). Theorizing Divisions and Hierarchies: Towards Commonality or Diversity. In C. Barnes, L. Barton, & M. Oliver (Eds.), *Disability Studies Today* (pp. 77–97). Bodmin: MPG Books.
- Vuori, J. (2009). Men’s Choices and Masculine Duties: Fathers in Expert Discussions. *Men and Masculinities*, 12(1), 45–72.
- Wakabayashi, M. (2004). *Taiwan, Divided Country and Her Democratization*. Taipei: Third Nature Publishing.
- Waldman, A. (2010). *Bad Mother: A Chronicle of Maternal Crimes, Minor Calamities, and Occasional Moments of Grace*. New York: Doubleday.

- Wall, G., & Arnold, S. (2007). How Involved is Involved Fathering?: An Exploration of the Contemporary Culture of Fatherhood. *Gender and Society*, 21(4), 508–527.
- Wan, Y. (1996). From Finding to Resettlement: The Protection of Developmentally Delayed Children's Basic Rights and Interests. *The Journal of Social Development*, 94, 66–73.
- Wang, C.-K. (2000). An Exploratory Study on the Formation of Child-rearing Fatherhood. *Research in Applied Psychology*, 6, 131–171.
- Wang, L., Alasuutari, P., & Aro, J. (2014). Aesthetic and Family Frames in the Online Sharing of Children's Birthday Photos. *Visual Communication*, 13(2), 191–209. <http://doi.org/10.1177/1470357213516722>
- Wang, R. (2013). A Critical Reflection on Forms of Modern Childhood by New Sociology of Childhood. *Taiwan Journal of Sociology of Education*, 13(2), 127–154.
- Wang, S., & Yu, H.-Y. A. (1997). Fatherhood in Dual-Wage Family. *Journal Of Women And Gender Studies*, 8, 115–149.
- Webb, L. M., & Lee, B. S. (2011). Mommy Blogs: The Centrality of Community in the Performance of Online Maternity. In M. Moravec (Ed.), *Motherhood Online* (pp. 244–257). Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing.
- Weber, S., & Dixon, S. (2007). Reviewing Young Peoples' Engagement with Technology. In S. Weber & S. Dixon (Eds.), *Growing Up Online: Young People and Digital Technologies* (pp. 245–258). New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Wei, L. (2009). Filter Blogs vs. Personal Journals: Understanding the Knowledge Production Gap on the Internet. *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication*, 14(3), 532–558.
- Wells, K. (2009). *Childhood in a Global Perspective*. Cambridge: Polity Press.

- West, C., & Zimmerman, D. H. (2009). Accounting for Doing Gender. *Gender and Society*, 23(1), 112–122.
- Westlake, E. J. (2008). Friend Me if You Facebook: Generation Y and Performative Surveillance. *TDR: The Drama Review*, 52(4), 21–40.  
<http://doi.org/10.1162/dram.2008.52.4.21>
- Widding, U. (2015). Parenting ideals and (un-) troubled parent positions. *Pedagogy, Culture & Society*, 23(1), 45–64. <http://doi.org/10.1080/14681366.2014.919955>
- Williams, P. J. (2011). The Tiger Mama Syndrome. *The Nation*, 292(8), 9.
- Williams, S. (2008). What is Fatherhood? Searching for the Reflexive Father. *Sociology*, 42(3), 487–502.
- Willie, C. V. (2013). On Merton's “ Insiders and Outsiders .” *American Journal of Sociology*, 78(5), 1269–1272.
- Włodarczyk, J. (2014). Intensive Grandmothering? Social Policy, Social Class and Intensive Mothering in Post-communist Poland. In L. R. Ennis (Ed.), *Intensive Mothering: The Cultural Contradictions of Modern Motherhood* (Kindle). Bradford.
- Woods, R. (2017). Exploring How the Social Model of Disability Can Be Re-invigorated for Autism: in Response to Jonathan Levitt. *Disability & Society*, 32(7), 1090–1095. <http://doi.org/10.1080/09687599.2017.1300390>
- Wu, A. M. (2009). From the “Runaway Child” to the “Model Child”: Representing Childhood in Taiwan Juvenile Fiction in the 1960s. *Interdisciplinary Journal of Taiwan Library Administration*, 5(2), 27–36.
- Wyness, M. (2012). *Childhood and Society* (Second Edi). Houndmills: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Xu, Q., & Yeung, W. J. (2013). Hoping for a Phoenix: Shanghai Fathers and Their Daughters. <http://doi.org/10.1177/0192513X12461245>

- Yeung, W.-J. J. (2012). Asian Fatherhood. *Journal of Family Issues*, 34(2), 141–158.  
<http://doi.org/10.1177/0192513X12461133>
- Zhang, Y. (2011). Constrained Agency: Chinese Mothers Blogging their Child Rearing Practices. In M. Moravec (Ed.), *Motherhood Online* (pp. 266–282). Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing.
- Zhong, Z. (2004). Win at the Starting Point: Develop Bilingual/Multilingual Learning for Preschoolers. *Journal of Child and Youth Welfare*, 6, 231–234.
- Zolotor, A. J. (2014). Corporal Punishment. *Pediatric Clinics of North America*, 61(5), 971–978. <http://doi.org/10.1016/j.pcl.2014.06.003>

## Appendix

From the China Times Global Chinese Blog Awards (VI, 2011), I was able to access five (the four finalists and one of the special awards winners) public blogs under the category of ‘parents, children and family’, while from the Blogger Top 100 (V, 2012), I could access eleven public blogs in the category of ‘parents and children’: the top 10 selected by the judges in this category, and the most popular blog in this category was not selected by the judges as the top 10. In the table, the key information on these recent winning blogs is presented.

Resource	Code	Parent	Covered age of the child	Number of relevant entries <sup>1</sup>
China Times Global Chinese Blog Awards 2011	CT1	Father (blog in child's name)	0-7y, the child with autism	232
	CT21	Mother	0-7y 0-4y	74
	CT22	Taiwanese mother, married to an American and lives in the U.S.	2-6y 4-8y	53
	CT23	(blog in the child's name)		The 'child' in the blog is a dog
	CTS	Single mother	0-2	101
Blogger Top 100, 2012	BT1	Mother	0-1y11m	173
	BT21	Father	9-11y	38
	BT22	Taiwanese father, married an American, lives in the U.S.	Twins 3-6y	46 (Only in one of 14 categories)
	BT23	Mother	0-2y 1m	59
	BT24	Father (blog in first child's nickname)	0-8y 0-6y	675 (recently called a halt by the first child)
	BT25	Mother	7-13y 5-11y	233
	BT26			This blog is a literature blog and the parenting and family in this blog are a theme of writing, not exactly parenting experiences
	BT27	Malaysian mother (Overseas Chinese), married a Taiwanese, lives in Taiwan (blog in both children's names)	4m-6y 0-4y	190

	BT28			There are six categories in this blog and none of them could be recognised as related to parenting.
	BT29			There is only one category among eleven that is family-related. After skimming the titles and abstracts in the category, very little of the contents could be identified as parenting or childhood-related.
	BTF	Father (the father uses the internet to organise a playgroup) (blog in first child's name)	0-3y4m 0-1y4m 0-1m	162

---

<sup>1</sup> If the blog covers the child between the ages of 0 and 6, I had only selected entries related to the child from 0-3 years of age. With regard to other categories (such as fatherhood), I had not read them in detail in this estimation stage.



